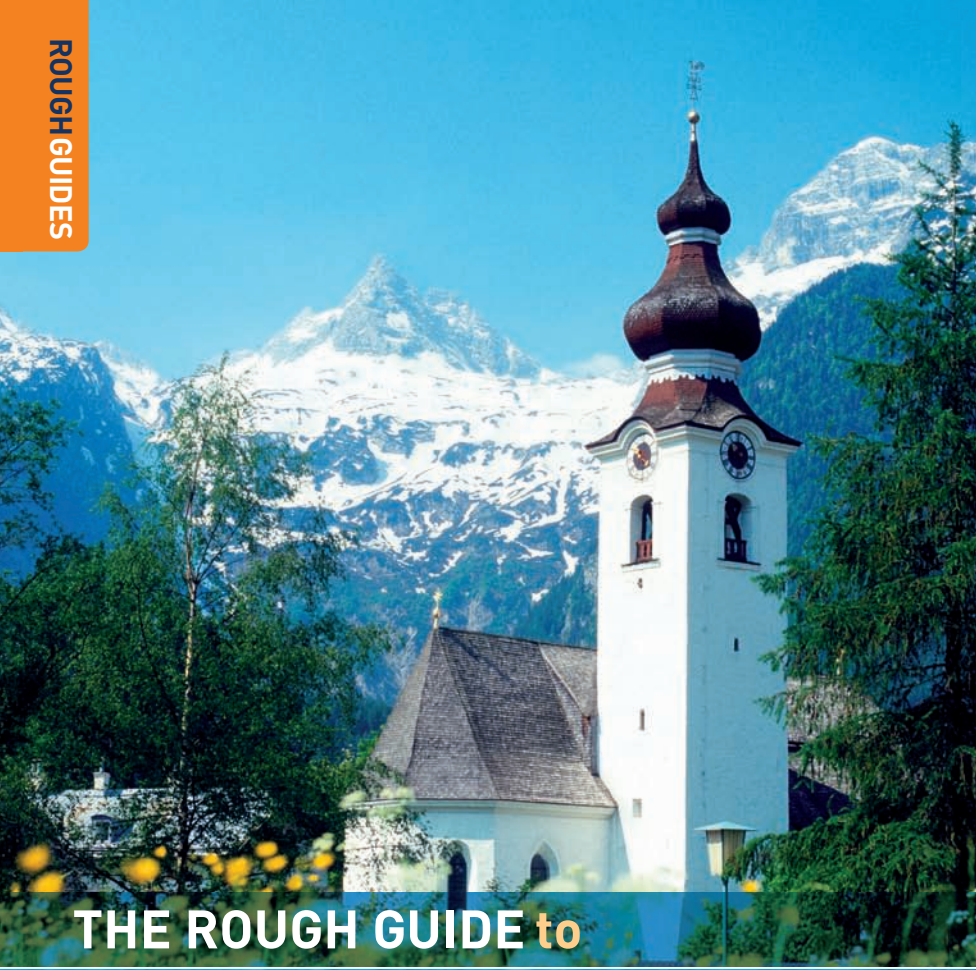
ROUGH GUIDES



THE ROUGH GUIDE to

Austria

VISIT…

About this book

Rough Guides are designed to be good to read and easy to use. The book is divided into the following sections, and you should be able to find whatever you need in one of them.

The introductory **colour section** is designed to give you a feel for Austria, suggesting when to go and what not to miss, and includes a full list of **contents**. Then comes **basics**, for pre-departure information and other practicalities.

The **guide** chapters cover the country in depth, each starting with a highlights panel, introduction and a map to help you plan your route.

The **contexts** section fills you in on the country's history and literature, while individual **colour sections** introduce skiing and Viennese coffee culture.

The book concludes with all the **small print**, including details of how to send in updates and corrections, and a comprehensive **index**.

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The publishers and authors have done their best to ensure the accuracy and currency of all the information in The Rough Guide to Austria, however, they can accept no responsibility for any loss, injury, or inconvenience sustained by any traveller as a result of information or advice contained in the guide.

The **Rough Guide** to

Austria

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and Christian Williams

ROUGH GUIDES

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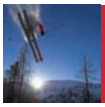


Skiing colour section following p.440

◀◀ Innsbruck ◀ Mountain biking in Paznaun, Tyrol

Introduction to

Austria

Snowy Alps and the Sound of Music, Mozart and chocolate, the Spanish Riding School and the Vienna Boys' Choir, skiing and yet more snowy Alps. The stock images of Austria are safe and old-fashioned, and are happily peddled by the country's highly efficient tourist industry. But it's not all old ladies in fur coats. For every wealthy St Anton skier, there's a snowboarder in Schladming; for every Strauss concertgoer, there's a clubber in Vienna; for every Kaffeehaus with Habsburg-era fixtures and fittings, there's a designer sushi bar open down the road; and for every far-right voter, there are at least two who believe fervently in the country's well-funded welfare state.

Physically, the Alps dominate the landscape, but Austria is by no means all mountainous vistas: the country stretches across central Europe for some 700km, from the shores of the Bodensee in the west to the edge of the flat Hungarian plain in the east. Far removed from the archetype are the wetlands and reed beds of Burgenland, and the dramatic sequence of slopes that carve their way up the Erzberg in Styria. In Upper and Lower Austria in particular, the predominantly low-key landscape of gentle rolling hills and vineyards can come as something of a surprise to first-time visitors. Yet this fertile, low-lying northern half of the country is, in fact, where the majority of Austrians live and work, many of them within commuting distance of the capital, **Vienna** – the country's chief tourist destination after the alpine regions.

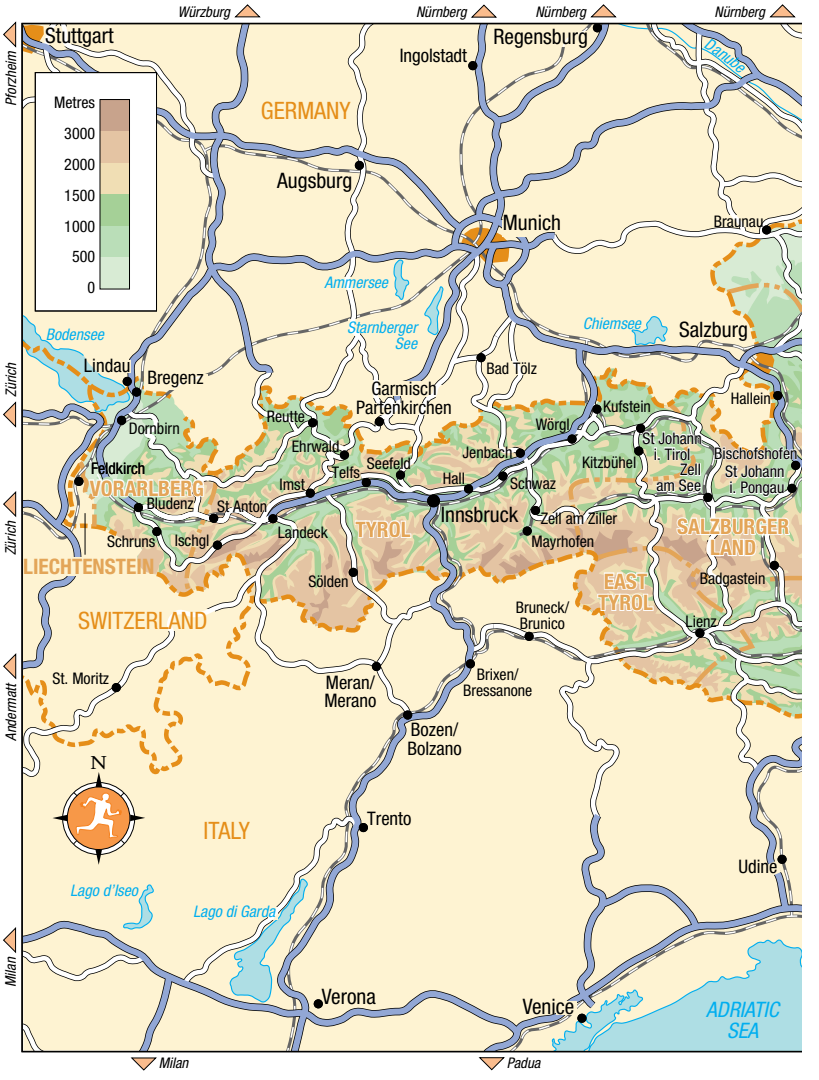
For all its love of old worldliness, and nostalgia for the days of the Habsburgs when Vienna was the capital of a vast, multinational empire, Austria today is a thoroughly modern, clean and eminently civilized country. Its tourist facilities are uniformly excellent, and whether you're staying in one of the popular skiing, hiking or spa resorts, or in an out-of-the-way *Gasthof*, you're likely to experience *Gemütlichkeit* – a typically Austrian term expressing a mixture of relaxed cosiness and hospitality – at some point during your visit. Like neighbouring Switzerland, Austria is also a supremely law-abiding nation, where no one jaywalks or drops litter, and the trains and trams run on time.

In fact, looking at the country at the beginning of the twenty-first century – stable, conservative and wealthy – you wouldn't think that Austria had spent most of the previous century struggling to find a national identity. After all, it was only in 1918, when the Habsburg Empire

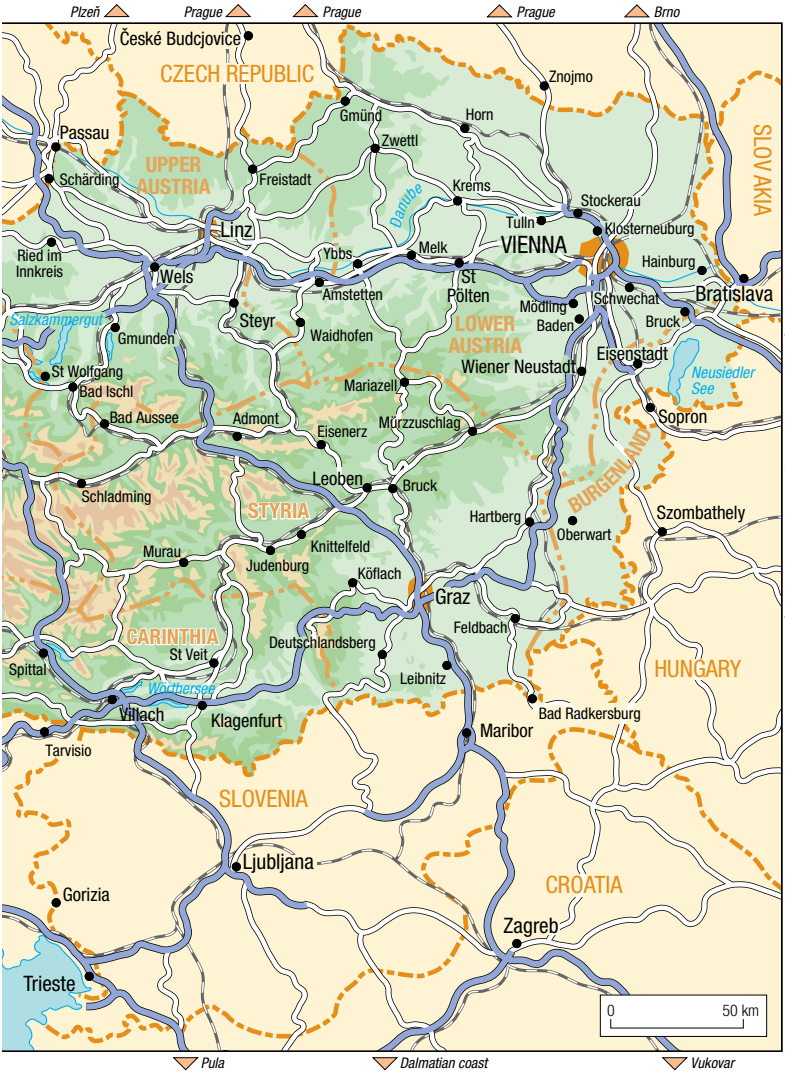
Fact file

- Austria is a landlocked country with an **area** of 83,855 square kilometres – roughly the size of Scotland or Idaho. The alps take up to 62 percent of the country: 39 percent is forested; 23 percent is pasture; and 17 percent arable. Of its eight neighbouring countries, the longest shared **border** is with Germany. The **highest point** is the Grossglockner peak (3798m) and the **lowest** the Neusiedlersee (115m). The two major **rivers** are the Danube and the Inn.
- The total **population** is 8.2 million, with 1.6 million (20 percent) in Vienna. Of this, 78 percent is Roman Catholic and 5 percent Protestant. A total of 68 percent is employed in the service industries; 29 percent in other industries and crafts; and 3 percent in agriculture and forestry.
- Austria is a **federal republic**, divided into nine *Länder* (states): Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Upper Austria, Vienna and the Vorarlberg.

▶ Pasterze Glacier



disintegrated, that the idea of a modern Austrian nation was born. The new republic, with a population of just eight million reluctant citizens, was riven by left- and right-wing political violence and, as a result, the majority of Austrians were wildly enthusiastic about the Anschluss with Nazi Germany in 1938. The price of Austria's participation, and ultimately defeat, in World War II, however, was Allied occupation. For ten years the country was split, like Germany, into Soviet, American, British and French zones. As a gesture of détente, the Soviets finally agreed to withdraw their troops, in return



for Austria's "permanent neutrality". At this point, Austria turned over a new leaf, and recast itself as a model of consensus politics, with an almost Scandinavian emphasis on social policy as the guiding principle of national life. Postwar stability saw the growth of a genuine, albeit low-key, patriotism, while the end of the Cold War put the country, and its capital, back at the heart of Europe.

In 1995, Austria became a full member of the **European Union**, a move that for many was a sign that the country had finally entered the mainstream

of European politics. From time to time, Austria's more reactionary elements have attracted widespread media attention, most notably during the Waldheim affair in 1986, when the wartime record of the president was called into question, and in 2000, when the far right Freedom Party under the charismatic Jörg Haider entered a coalition government. But the reality is that the Socialist party retains the strongest influence in government, as it has for much of the postwar period, and the country's political stability, for the most part, continues intact.

Where to go

There's a lot to be said for concentrating on just one or two regions, rather than trying to cover a bit of everything in one trip – you could happily spend a week or two in any one of the Austrian provinces, or *Länder*. Austria's unique combination of outdoor attractions and classic urban centres ensures that you can pack a lot of variety into your stay: take in some fresh air at a high altitude, linger over one of the country's world-class art collections, make the most of a musical heritage second to none, or select any number from the list of recommended highlights below.

▼ Almabtrieb, the return of the cows from the alpine pastures

Without a visit to **Vienna** you'll return home with only half the picture. Built on a grand scale as seat of the Habsburg Empire, it's a place that positively drips with imperial nostalgia. The pickings are rich, with the old palaces of the Hofburg and Schönbrunn high on the list, as are the cultural offerings from the gargantuan art collections of the Kunsthistorisches Museum to the new cultural complex of the MuseumsQuartier. Equally compelling, nowadays, are the ghosts of Vienna's golden age at the end of the nineteenth century, when the likes of Freud, Klimt, Schiele and Schönberg frequented the city's cafés. The city boasts some wonderful Jugendstil and early modernist buildings and a bevy of traditional *fin-de-siècle* cafés patrolled by waiters in tuxedos. Last, but by no means least, Vienna is by far the best place in the country for night-life, and that means everything from top-class opera to techno.

Salzburg is no less intoxicating. Its Altstadt contains the country's most concentrated ensemble of Baroque architecture, and the Hohensalzburg fortress is arguably the country's most impressive medieval castle. A substantial musical pedigree is ensured by the city's status as the birthplace of Mozart and venue of the Salzburg Festival, one of the world's most renowned celebrations of classical music and theatre. Of Austria's other regional capitals, **Innsbruck** combines both a buzzing nightlife and close proximity to

Public transport

If there's one thing every visitor would like to take home with them from Austria, it's the transport system, which is just about one of the most efficient in the world. Not only do the trains run on time, but even more remarkably the buses run on schedule, to a timetable. Imagine: you go to a bus stop, look up the time of the next bus, and it arrives when it says it will. Simple, you might think, but just a dream for many of the world's public transport users. In Graz, Innsbruck and Linz, you'll find ultra-modern trams ploughing the streets, while in Vienna, along with one of the world's largest tram systems, there's a clean and safe U-Bahn network that's constantly expanding. For the privilege of using the capital's public transport, visitors pay just €14 a week, less than half what commuters in London pay. And the whole system runs on trust. At least once a month, you're likely to be stopped by an inspector, and with the fines high and the ticket prices low, you'd be a fool to get caught. Outside of Vienna, public transport often comes free of charge to visitors who stay the night in the region.

◀ Stift Göttweig, hilltop Benedictine monastery

some of the Tyrol's highest peaks to make it one of Austria's most popular destinations. Its attractive and largely medieval city centre focuses on the Hofkirche, site of the memorial to sixteenth-century Habsburg strongman Emperor Maximilian I. In the Styrian capital, **Graz**, the main attractions are the Altstadt, the fine-art collections of the Landesmuseum Joanneum and the Baroque Eggenberg Palace. Austria's second largest city is also a good base from which to venture out into the vineyards and pumpkin fields of the rural southeast.

Explorations down the back streets of Austria's small **medieval towns**, many of which are still enclosed by their original walls, will reward you with hidden arcaded courtyards, tinkling fountains and overflowing flower boxes: Freistadt in Upper Austria, Hall in the Tyrol and Friesach in Carinthia present the pick of the bunch. Lower Austria has the country's highest concentration of **monasteries**, ranging from the Baroque excess of Melk, Altenburg and Zwettl to the likes of Heiligenkreuz, built on the cusp of the stylistic transition from Romanesque to Gothic. For unadulterated Romanesque architecture, head for Gurk in Carinthia; for Rococo floridity, Wilhering in Upper Austria is hard to beat. Austria also holds a bewildering variety of **castles and châteaux**, from fortified seats such as Forchtenstein in Burgenland to luxury aristocratic piles like Artstetten in Lower Austria. The two finest imperial palaces are the magnificent Baroque residence of Schönbrunn, on the outskirts of Vienna, and Schloss Ambras, the Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol's Renaissance treasure-trove near Innsbruck.

Musical pilgrimages are possible to the birthplaces or resting places of such luminaries as Beethoven, Bruckner, Haydn, Liszt, Mozart, Mahler, Schönberg and Schubert. The country's top **music festivals**, among them the Salzburg Festival, the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt and the chamber music festival in Lockenhaus, draw international performers and audiences alike. At both the Bregenz Festival and the operetta festival in Mörbisch, floating stages host top-class performances against a shimmering backdrop.

Austria's main lakeland area is the Salzkammergut, where the Wolfgangsee, Mondsee, Traunsee and Hallstättersee offer a combination of water-based pursuits and stunning scenery. To the south, the Carinthian lakes of the Wörthersee, Ossiachersee and Millstättersee boast good bathing, boating and windsurfing facilities. In the far east of the country, the reed-encircled Neusiedlersee, Austria's only steppe lake, provides a total contrast, and an opportunity to marry beach culture with a spot of bird-watching.

Austria forms one of Europe's most mountainous countries, yet an excellent network of transport links puts even the dizziest of heights within reach. Key summer **hiking** areas are the alpine regions of western Austria, stretching from northeastern Styria and eastern Carinthia through the Salzkammergut, Salzburger Land, Tyrol and Vorarlberg. For **snow sports**, the Salzburger Land, Tyrol and Vorarlberg boast the highest concentration and widest range of modern, fully equipped resorts.

Finally, a great deal of Austria's industrial heritage has been put to good touristic effect, and many of the **show-mines** count among top attractions. If you have time to visit only one of them, pick from the following: the iron-ore workings at Eisenerz in Styria, the salt mine at Bad Dürrnberg in the Salzburger Land, the salt mine above Hallstaat in the Salzkammergut, the lead mine at Bad Bleiberg in Carinthia, and the silver mine at Schwaz in the Tyrol.

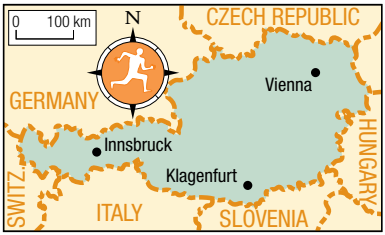
▼ Leopold Museum, Vienna

▼ Vienna café

When to go

The best time to visit Austria depends on whether you're aiming for urban or rural parts. Most of the mountain resorts, for example, have **two distinct tourist seasons**, one for winter sports enthusiasts, the other for summer hikers. In between times, you may find many of the tourist facilities closed. More urban centres, however, act as **year-round tourist destinations**, with the number of visitors swelling

during peak holidays and annual festivals – Vienna pulls in crowds over Christmas, New Year and, of course, Fasching (the ball season), while the Salzburg Festival ensures a steady stream of well-heeled visitors in July and August.



For the best of the warm weather, plan to go between **April and October** – Austrian summers, in particular, are reliably warm, but not overpoweringly so. If you're skiing, you can pretty much guarantee a good covering of snow from **November onwards to April**. Away from the ski resorts, winter travel can't really be recommended, since the weather can be pretty wet and miserable. Weather conditions vary only slightly across the country, with the alpine regions decidedly cooler, the lowland regions in the north and east enduring more continental conditions of colder winters and hotter summers, and the southeast of the country enjoying longer, warmer, almost Mediterranean summers. Be aware that whatever the season, if you're at a high altitude, the weather can change quickly and dramatically. The possibility of a thundery shower exists at any time of the year.

Average daily temperatures in degrees Celsius, and monthly rainfall in millimetres.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Innsbruck												
Temp Max	1	4	11	16	20	24	25	24	21	15	8	2
Min	-7	-5	0	4	8	11	13	12	10	5	0	-4
Rainfall	54	49	41	52	73	110	110	108	81	67	53	46
Klagenfurt												
Temp Max	-1	3	9	15	20	23	25	24	20	14	6	1
Min	-9	-7	-2	3	7	11	13	12	10	5	0	-4
Rainfall	41	45	39	71	88	125	125	104	83	89	75	52
Vienna												
Temp Max	1	3	8	15	19	23	25	24	20	14	7	3
Min	-4	-3	-1	6	10	14	15	15	11	7	3	-1
Rainfall	39	44	44	45	70	67	84	72	42	56	52	45

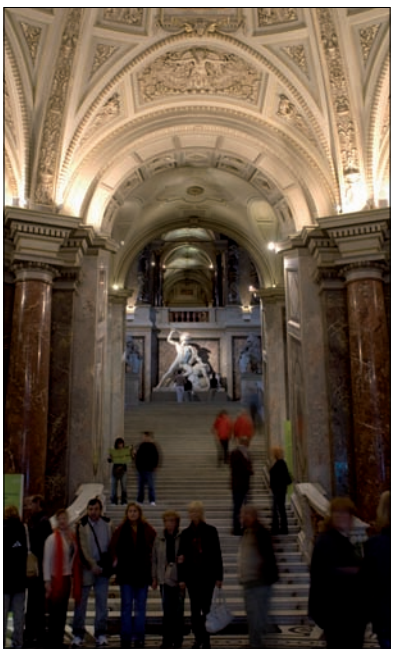
29

things not to miss

It's not possible to see everything that Austria has to offer in one trip – and we don't suggest you try. What follows is a selective and subjective taste of the country's highlights: vibrant cities and shimmering lakes, top mountain resorts, Baroque monasteries and secluded alpine hideaways. They're arranged in five colour-coded categories to help you find the very best things to see, do and experience. All entries have a page reference to take you straight into the guide, where you can find out more.

01 **Hochosterwitz** Page **335** • Stunning hilltop castle that looks like something out of a fairy tale.

02 **Skiing in the Arlberg** Page **526** • The Arlberg region is Austria's top destination for off-piste skiing and snowboarding.



03 **Kunsthistorisches Museum** Page **101** • A spectacular late nineteenth-century building housing one of the world's greatest art collections, famous above all for its Breughels.

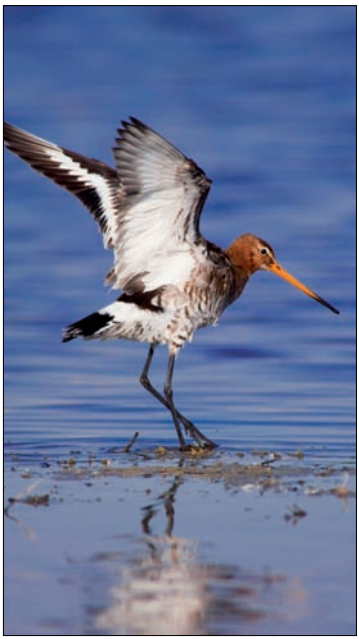
04 **Kaffeehäuser** See ***Coffee and cakes* colour section** • With their tuxedoed waiters, calorific cakes, copious newspapers and unhurried air, *Kaffeehäuser* are the most important and enduring social institution of Austrian cities.

05 **Schönbrunn** Page **121** • By far the most magnificent of the Habsburgs' many palaces, Schönbrunn also boasts wonderful gardens, fountains, mazes, hothouses and a zoo.

06 **Innsbruck** Page **464** • This dramatically located Gothic and Baroque city offers some wonderful options for outdoor activity, as well as a gem-like medieval core.

07 Schubertiade Page 46 • Schubert *lieder*, top classical talent and the idyllic alpine surroundings of Vorarlberg make for an exceptional cultural experience.

08 Neusiedler See Page 252 • Shallow steppe lake that's one of central Europe's top birding destinations and a major Austrian watersports centre.



09 Christkindlmarkt Page 47 • In the weeks leading up to Christmas, marketplaces across the country fill with stalls selling arts, crafts and, more importantly, mulled wine and punch.

10 Heuriger Page **44** • These traditional taverns are the places to head for some local wine and self-service buffets of simple peasant fare. A *Buschen*, or bunch of evergreen boughs, signifies that it's open.

12 Cycling in the Wachau Page **170** • Cycle along the country's prettiest section of the Danube.

11 Zentralfriedhof Page **131** • One of the world's most awesome municipal cemeteries, with over two and a half million corpses, including Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Schönberg and the entire Strauss family.

13 Melk Page **174** • Spectacularly perched on a woody bluff overlooking the Danube, Melk's Baroque monastery is one of the country's most rewarding to visit.

14 **Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz** Page **225** • A stunningly modern piece of architecture, lit at night by a galaxy of bulbs.

15 **Pumpkinseed oil** Page **267** • Southern Styrian pumpkins are the source of this delicious oil, added to many local dishes to give them a distinct, autumnal flavour.

16 Schloss Ambras Page **477** • One of Austria's great Renaissance palaces offers an insight into sixteenth-century court life.

17 Salzburger Festspiele Page **395** • Since 1920, this summer festival has packed in the crowds with innovative productions from ground-breaking artists.

18 Altenburg Page **189** • Benedictine monastery transformed in the 1730s into one of the country's most stunning Baroque abbeys.

19 Hallstaat Page **449** • Picturesque lakeside village that clings to the steeply wooded slopes of an old salt mine in the Salzkammergut.

20 Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse Pages **358** & **417** • A mountain pass that's one of the most spectacular routes across the Alps.

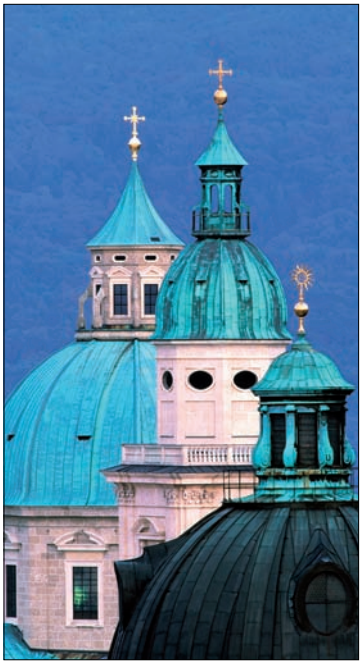
21 Schatzkammer Page **91** • The imperial family may have gone, but their hoard of crown jewels is full of absolute gems.

22 Loisium Page **169** • Take a trip beneath a sunny Kamptal vineyard to discover the wine culture of Lower Austria – and be sure to sample the results after the tour.

23 Sound of Music
Page **397** • Devise your own itinerary or take an organized bus tour round the locations used for the world's greatest musical movie.

24 Paragliding in the Zillertal Page **494** • The best way to experience this breathtaking valley is from the air, strapped in tandem with your experienced pilot.

25 **Mauthausen** Page **230** • Austria's most notorious concentration camp is a chilling reminder of the country's dark history.



26 **Salzburg** Page **372** • Austria's Baroque jewel is filled with beautiful architecture and kept busy by the interest in its most famous son, Mozart.

27 **Schafberg** Page **431** • Take the antique mountain steam train up this peak for a panoramic view over the Wolfgangsee.

28 **MuseumsQuartier** Page **103** • Vienna's new arts complex houses the city's chief modern art museum, a welter of works by Schiele, and a host of funky cafés and bars.

29 **Watersports: Carinthia & Salzkammergut** Pages **316** & **427** • Rafting, windsurfing, waterskiing or just plain old swimming – it can all be done against a backdrop of craggy mountains in Carinthia and the Salzkammergut.

Basics

Basics

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Getting there

Unless you're coming from a neighbouring European country, the quickest way to get to Austria is by plane. There are direct flights from just about every European capital city to Vienna, Austria's chief international gateway, and plenty to Salzburg and Innsbruck. There are also one or two non-stop flights from North America, though you'll get a much wider choice – and often lower fares – if you fly via London or another European hub. Note that if you're heading for western Austria, Munich, Zurich and Salzburg are better options than Vienna.

How much you pay to fly to Austria depends on the **season**, with the highest fares charged from Easter to October, and around Christmas and New Year. Alternatively, with budget airlines, the earlier you book, the cheaper the prices.

Another option, if you're travelling from Britain or elsewhere in Europe, is to go by **train**, **bus** or **car** – this will take considerably longer than the plane and may not work out that much cheaper, but it's undoubtedly better for the environment. For more details, see p.31.

Booking flights online

Most people now book their flights **online**, and good deals can often be found through discount or auction sites, as well as through the airlines' own websites.

Online booking

- www.airfaresflights.com.au (in Australia)
- www.cheapflights.co.uk (in UK)
- www.cheapflights.ie (in Ireland)
- www.cheapflights.com (in US)
- www.cheapflights.ca (in Canada)
- www.cheapo.com (in UK)
- www.expedia.co.uk (in UK)
- www.expedia.com (in US)
- www.expedia.ca (in Canada)
- www.lastminute.com (in UK)
- www.opodo.co.uk (in UK)
- www.orbitz.com (in US)
- www.travelocity.co.uk (in UK)
- www.travelocity.com (in US)
- www.travelocity.ca (in Canada)
- www.zuji.com.au (in Australia)
- www.zuji.co.nz (in New Zealand)

Flights from Britain and Ireland

You can book a direct **flight** to Vienna from London and Dublin, and to other parts of Austria from all over the UK and Europe. The most competitive fares are with the budget airlines, though the national airlines, British Airways (BA) and Austrian Airlines, have had to slash their prices accordingly.

If you book far enough in advance or can be flexible about your dates, you can get return **fares** from London to Vienna for as little as £50 (taxes included). From Ireland, return airfares start at around €90 return from Dublin. Of course, if you don't book early, prices can skyrocket. Since routes can change – and airlines can go under – with little notice, it's best to check the airport websites for the latest.

Flights from the US and Canada

Austrian Airlines and Air Transat offer nonstop **flights from North America** to Vienna. You'll get a much wider choice of flights and ticket prices, though, if you opt for an indirect flight and one or two changes of plane, allowing you to depart from any number of North American cities and travel via one of the major gateways.

Flying time from the east coast to Vienna is about nine hours. **Fares** depend very much on the flexibility of the ticket and on availability, with a New York–Vienna return costing $700 and upwards, and a Toronto–Vienna return costing CDN$800 and upwards.

Fly less – stay longer! Travel and climate change

Climate change is the single biggest issue facing our planet. It is caused by a build-up in the atmosphere of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, which are emitted by many sources – including planes. Already, flights account for around 3–4 percent of human-induced global warming: that figure may sound small, but it is rising year on year and threatens to counteract the progress made by reducing greenhouse emissions in other areas.

Rough Guides regard travel, overall, as a global benefit, and feel strongly that the advantages to developing economies are important, as are the opportunities for greater contact and awareness among peoples. But we all have a responsibility to limit our personal "carbon footprint". That means giving thought to how often we fly and what we can do to redress the harm that our trips create.

Flying and climate change

Pretty much every form of motorized travel generates CO_2, but planes are particularly bad offenders, releasing large volumes of greenhouse gases at altitudes where their impact is far more harmful. Flying also allows us to travel much further than we would contemplate doing by road or rail, so the emissions attributable to each passenger become truly shocking. For example, one person taking a return flight between Europe and California produces the equivalent impact of 2.5 tonnes of CO_2 – similar to the yearly output of the average UK car.

Less harmful planes may evolve but it will be decades before they replace the current fleet – which could be too late for avoiding climate chaos. In the meantime, there are limited options for concerned travellers: to reduce the amount we travel by air (take fewer trips, stay longer!), to avoid night flights (when plane contrails trap heat from Earth but can't reflect sunlight back to space), and to make the trips we do take "climate neutral" via a carbon offset scheme.

Carbon offset schemes

Offset schemes run by climatecare.org, carbonneutral.com and others allow you to "neutralize" the greenhouse gases that you are responsible for releasing. Their websites have simple calculators that let you work out the impact of any flight. Once that's done, you can pay to fund projects that will reduce future carbon emissions by an equivalent amount (such as the distribution of low-energy light bulbs and cooking stoves in developing countries). Please take the time to visit our website and make your trip climate neutral.

Ⓦ www.roughguides.com/climatechange

Flights from Australia and New Zealand

Flight time from **Australia and New Zealand** to Vienna is more than twenty hours, depending on routes and transfer times. There's a wide variety of routes, with those touching down in Southeast Asia the quickest and cheapest on average. Given the length of the journey involved, you might be better off including a night's stopover in your itinerary, and indeed some airlines include one in the price of the flight.

The cheapest direct scheduled flights to London are usually to be found on one of the Asian airlines. Average return **fares** (including taxes) from eastern gateways to London are A$1500–2000 in low season, A$2000–2500 in high season. Fares from Perth or Darwin cost around A$200 less. You'll then need to add A$100–200 onto all these for the connecting flight to Vienna. Return fares from Auckland to London range between NZ$2000 and NZ$3000 depending on the season, route and carrier

Airports

Innsbruck Ⓦ www.innsbruck-airport.com
Salzburg Ⓦ www.salzburg-airport.com
Vienna Ⓦ www.viennaairport.com

Airlines

Air Berlin UK ⓣ0870/738 8880, ⓦwww.airberlin.com

Aer Lingus ⓣ0818/365 000, ⓦwww.aerlingus.com

Austrian Airlines Australia ⓣ1800/642 438 or 02/9251 6155, Canada ⓣ1-888/817-4444, Ireland ⓣ1800/509 142; UK ⓣ0870/124 2625, US ⓣ1-800/843-0002; ⓦwww.aua.com

Air Canada Canada ⓣ1-888/247-2262, ⓦwww.aircanada.com

Air New Zealand NZ ⓣ0800/737 000, Australia ⓣ0800/132 476, Canada ⓣ1-800/663-5494, UK ⓣ0800/028 4149, USA ⓣ1-800/262-1234; ⓦwww.airnz.co.nz

Air Transat Canada ⓣ1-866/847-1112, ⓦwww.airtransat.com

American Airlines USⓣ1-800/433-7300, ⓦwww.aa.com

Asiana Airlines Australia ⓣ02/9767 4343, ⓦwww.flyasiana.com

British Airways UK ⓣ0870/850 9850, Australia ⓣ1300/767 177, Ireland ⓣ1890/626 747, New Zealand ⓣ09/966 9777, South Africa ⓣ114/418 600, US & Canada ⓣ1-800/AIRWAYS; ⓦwww.ba.com

Cathay Pacific Australia ⓣ13 17 47, New Zealand ⓣ09/379 0861; ⓦwww.cathaypacific.com

Delta US & Canada ⓣ1-800/221-1212, ⓦwww.delta.com

easyJet UK ⓣ0905/821 0905, ⓦwww.easyjet.com

flyBE UK ⓣ0871/700 0535, ⓦwww.flybe.com

Lufhansa Australia ⓣ1300/655 727, Canada ⓣ1-800/563-5954, UK ⓣ0870/837 7747, Ireland ⓣ01/844 5544, US ⓣ1-800/399-5838; ⓦwww.lufthansa.com

Malaysia Airlines Australia ⓣ13 26 27, New Zealand ⓣ0800/777 747; ⓦwww.malaysia-airlines.com

Niki UK ⓣ0870/738 8880, ⓦwww.flyniki.com

Qantas Airways Australia ⓣ13 13 13, New Zealand ⓣ0800/808 767 or 09/357 8900; ⓦwww.qantas.com

Ryanair Ireland ⓣ0818/303 030, UK ⓣ0871/246 0000; ⓦwww.ryanair.com

Singapore Airlines Australia ⓣ13 10 11, New Zealand ⓣ0800/808 909; ⓦwww.singaporeair.com

SkyEurope UK ⓣ0905/722 2747, ⓦwww.skyeurope.com

Virgin Atlantic US ⓣ1-800/821-5438, ⓦwww.virgin-atlantic.com

Agents and operators

Blue Danube Tours US ⓣ1-800/268-4155 or 416/362 5000, ⓦwww.bluedanubeholidays.com. Extensive range of city breaks and package tours, plus tailor-made options.

Crystal Holidays UK ⓣ0870/166 4971, ⓦwww.crystalholidays.co.uk. Summer and winter packages and flight-only deals from all over the UK into Salzburg and Innsbruck.

Exodus UK ⓣ0870/240 5550, ⓦwww.exodus.co.uk. Experienced adventure tour operator running excellent small-group cross-country skiing and walking trips in the Tyrol and cycling tours along the Danube.

Herzerl Tours US ⓣ1-800/684-8488 or 914/771 8558, ⓦwww.herzerltours.com. Food, wine, gardens and music are the focus of some of the many Austrian cultural tours on offer.

HF Holidays UK ⓣ0845/470 7558, ⓦwww.hfholidays.co.uk. Walking and skiing tours in the Tyrol and the Salzkammergut, plus cycling tours around Lake Constance and along the Danube.

Interhome UK ⓣ020/8780 6633, ⓦwww.interhome.co.uk. Over a thousand self-catering chalets, houses and apartments across Austria.

Made to Measure UK ⓣ01243/533 333, ⓦwww.mtmhols.co.uk. Luxury package-tour specialist with art history packages to Vienna, and ski holidays.

Martin Randall Travel UK ⓣ020/8742 3355, ⓦwww.martinrandall.com. Small-group cultural tours, led by experts on art, archeology or music. Tours include a walk along the Danube, a Mozartian trip to Salzburg and a Christmas visit to Vienna.

North South Travel UK ⓣ01245/608 291, ⓦwww.northsouthtravel.co.uk. Friendly, competitive travel agency, offering discounted fares worldwide. Profits are used to support projects in the developing world, especially the promotion of sustainable tourism.

Smolka Tours US ⓣ1-800/722-0057 or 732/576 8813, ⓦwww.smolkatours.com. Specialists in Austrian group or fully independent travel, including cultural, hiking and biking itineraries, music packages and opera tours.

STA Travel UK ⓣ0870/163 0026, US ⓣ1-800/781-4040, Canada ⓣ1-888/427-5639, Australia ⓣ1300/733 035, New Zealand ⓣ0508/782 872, South Africa ⓣ0861/781 781; ⓦwww.statravel.com. Worldwide specialists in independent travel; also student IDs, travel insurance, car rental, rail passes, and more. Good discounts for students and under-26s.

Trailfinders UK ⓣ0845/058 5858, Ireland ⓣ01/677 7888, Australia ⓣ1300/780 212; ⓦwww.trailfinders.com. One of the best-informed and most efficient agents for independent travellers.

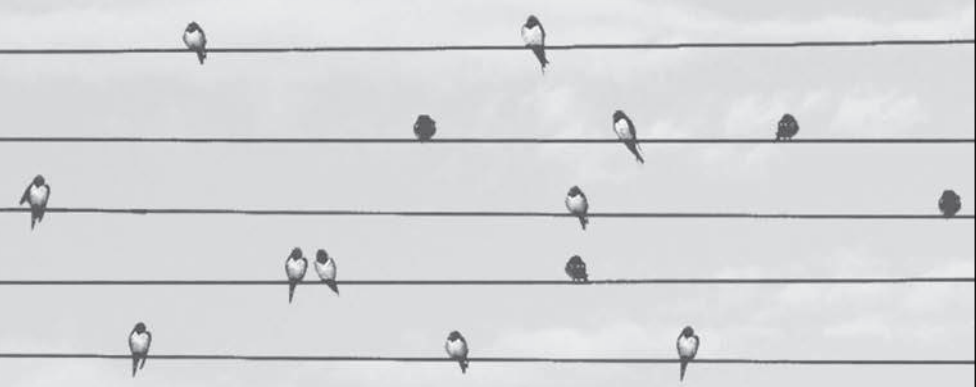
USIT Ireland ⓣ01/602 1906, Northern Ireland ⓣ028/9032 7111, ⓦwww.usit.ie. Specialists in student, youth and independent travel.

Come to where The Sound Of Music is always in the air.

There is more to Austria than meets the ear: opera, musicals, the famous Salzburger Festspiele, traditional wine taverns with local musicians, classical and modern music festivals, clubs, bars and cafés. Not to mention the sweet sounds of nature. Tune in to Austria with Austrian. Tune in with Austrian.

Austrian

We fly for your smile.



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

www.austrian.com

By train

Travelling **by train** is a pleasantly old-fashioned and extremely leisurely way to reach Austria. You can travel from London overnight in around sixteen to twenty hours. Fares start at around £170 return but depend on the route you take and how far in advance you book your ticket.

There are several possible routes from London depending on where you're going in Austria. For Vienna, the cheapest is **via Brussels and Cologne**, with a change in both, and an overnight service from Cologne (Köln). For Salzburg or Innsbruck, you need to travel **via Paris**, from where there's a direct overnight service to Munich, and connections to Salzburg from there.

Although you can simply crash out on the seats on the overnight services, it makes sense to pay the extra (which can be as little as £7) for a **couchette**. Couchettes are mixed-sex and allow little privacy; for slightly more comfort, you can book a bed in a single-sex two-berth **sleeper** for around £25 extra one way.

Fares for continental rail travel are much more flexible than they used to be, so it's worth shopping around for the best deal, rather than taking the first offer you get. Tickets are usually valid for two months and allow as many stopovers as you want on the specified route. If you're travelling with one or more companions, you may be eligible for a further discount.

The cheapest way to **book tickets** is usually online, but you may have to use more than one website – alternatively, phone one of the agents listed below.

Train information

Deutsche Bahn ⓣ0871/880 8066 (phone lines open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm), ⓦwww.bahn.co.uk. Competitive discounted fares for any journey from London across Europe, with very reasonable prices for journeys passing through Germany.

European Rail ⓣ020/7387 0444 (phone lines open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm), ⓦwww.europeanrail.com. Rail specialist that consistently offers competitive prices on international rail tickets from anywhere in the UK.

Eurostar ⓣ0870/518 6186 (phone lines open Mon–Fri 8am–9pm, Sat 8am–8pm & Sun 9am–5pm), ⓦwww.eurostar.com. Latest fares and youth discounts (plus online booking) on the Eurostar service, plus competitive add-on fares from the rest of the UK.

Man in Seat 61 ⓦwww.seat61.com. The finest train website there is, full of incredibly useful tips and links for rail travel anywhere in the world.

National Rail ⓣ0845/748 4950 (phone lines open 24hr), ⓦwww.nationalrail.co.uk. First stop for details of all train travel within the UK – fares, passes, train times and delays due to engineering works.

Rail Europe ⓣ0870/584 8848 (phone lines open Mon–Fri 8am–9pm, Sat 9am–6pm & Sun 10am–5pm), ⓦwww.raileurope.co.uk. SNCF-owned information and ticket agent for all European passes and journeys from London. They also have an office at 179 Piccadilly, London W1 (Mon–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm).

TrainsEurope ⓣ0871/700 7722 (phone lines open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm), ⓦwww.trainseurope.co.uk. Agent specializing in discounted international rail travel.

By bus

One of the cheapest ways to get to Austria is by bus. Eurolines run a direct service from London's Victoria Coach Station more or less daily. Coaches tend to set off in the morning, arriving in Wien-Mitte/Landstrasse roughly 22 hours later. The trip is bearable (just about), but only really worth it if you absolutely can't find the extra cash for the cheap flight. **Fares** start at around £75 return, though under-26s and over-60s can get a further discount.

Bus information

Eurolines UK ⓣ0871/781 8181, ⓦwww.eurolines.co.uk; Ireland ⓣ01/836 6111, ⓦwww.eurolines.ie. Tickets can also be purchased from any National Express or Bus Éireann agent.

By car

With two or more passengers, **driving** to Austria can work out relatively inexpensive. However, it's not the most relaxing option, unless you enjoy pounding along the motorway systems of Europe for the best part of a day and a night.

Eurotunnel operates a 24-hour train service carrying vehicles and their passengers from Folkestone to Calais. At peak times, services run every ten minutes, with the journey lasting 35 minutes. Off-peak fares in the high season start at £150 return (passengers included). The alternative is to

catch one of the **ferries** between Dover and Calais, Boulogne or Dunkirk. Prices vary enormously but if you book in advance, summer fares can be as little as £70 return per carload. Journey times are usually around ninety minutes. If you're travelling from north of London, however, it might be worth taking one of the longer ferry journeys from Rosyth, Newcastle, Hull or Harwich. To find out the cheapest fares across the Channel, check out ⓦwww.ferrysmart.co.uk.

Once you've made it onto the continent, you've got something in the region of 800–1200km of driving ahead of you. For Vienna, the most direct **route** from Ostend or Calais is via Brussels, Liège (Luik), Cologne (Köln), Frankfurt and Nuremberg (Nürnberg); for Salzburg and Innsbruck, it's better to go via Brussels, Cologne, Stuttgart and Munich (München). It costs nothing to drive on motorways in Belgium and Germany, but to go on an Austrian Autobahn you must have a sticker or *Vignette* (available at border crossings and petrol stations); the cheapest version is valid for ten days and costs €7.60. If you're travelling by car you'll need proof of ownership or a letter from the owner giving you permission to drive the vehicle. You also need a country identification sticker, a red warning triangle in case you break down, a first-aid kit (all these are compulsory in Austria), and a "Green Card" for third-party insurance cover at the very least.

Cross-Channel information

DFDS Seaways ⓣ0871/522 9955, ⓦwww.dfds.co.uk. Newcastle to Amsterdam.
Eurotunnel ⓣ0870/535 3535, ⓦwww.eurotunnel.com. Folkstone to Calais through the tunnel.
Norfolk Line ⓣ0870/870 1020, ⓦwww.norfolkline-ferries.co.uk. Dover to Dunkirk.
P&O Stena Line ⓣ0870/598 0333, ⓦwww.poferries.com. Dover to Calais and Hull to Rotterdam and Zeebrugge.
Sea France ⓣ0870/571 1711, ⓦwww.seafrance.com. Dover to Calais.
Stena Line ⓣ0870/570 7070, ⓦwww.stenaline.co.uk. Harwich to the Hook of Holland.
Superfast Ferries ⓣ0870/234 0870, ⓦwww.superfast.com. Rosyth (near Edinburgh) to Zeebrugge.

Getting around

Austria's public transport system is fast, efficient and, all things considered, relatively cheap. Train and bus routes tend to be fully integrated, complementing each other rather than competing. You can reach most areas of the country by public transport, although rural villages may only be served by one bus per day, or just a couple per week. Getting around on Sundays and public holidays can be problematic: train services are only slightly reduced but most rural bus services cease altogether.

Most parts of Austria – including the big cities – operate a zonal travelcard (*Zeitkarte* or *Netzkarte*) system covering all forms of **public transport** in that particular area. Ticket durations and prices vary considerably from one place to another, but it's safe to assume that, if you're staying in one area and are planning to use public transport, then it will be much cheaper to buy a 24-hour ticket (*Tageskarte*) or seven-day ticket (*Wochenkarte*) for the relevant zone than to buy tickets for each individual journey. Travelcards can be bought from both train and bus stations, and often from tourist offices, too.

Trains

Austrian Federal Railways or ÖBB (*Österreichische Bundesbahnen*, ⓣ05/1717, ⓦwww.oebb.at) run a punctual, clean and comfortable rail network, which includes most

towns of any size. Trains marked "EC" or "EN" (EuroCity and EuroNight international expresses), "ICE" or "IC" (Austrian InterCity expresses) are the fastest. Those designated "D" (*Schnellzug*) or "E" (Eilzug) are the next fastest,stopping at most intermediate points, while the *Regionalzug* is the slowest form of service, stopping at all stations. Both InterRail and Eurail passes are valid for the ÖBB network, as well as for the majority of small, **privately owned railways** that augment it – the three that you're most likely to come across are the Zillertalbahn (from Jenbach to Mayrhofen), the Murtalbahn (from Unzmarkt to Tamsweg via Murau) and the Graz–Köflacher-Bahn (from Graz to Köflach and from Graz to Wies-Ebiswald). Passes are less likely to be valid for the tourist-oriented **mountain railways**, such as the Schafbergbahn (see p.431) or the Achenseebahn (see p.492), although they may secure a reduction.

Fares are calculated according to distance, with a ticket from Vienna to Linz, a journey of 173km, costing around €30. Tickets (*Fahrschein*) should be bought from the ticket office in the train station (*Bahnhof* or *Hauptbahnhof* if it's the main station in a big city). If travelling from a small, unstaffed halt, however, tickets can be bought on the train. Return tickets are rarely cheaper than two singles, but are valid for two months and allow for unlimited stop-offs en route. InterCity and EuroCity trains can get crowded at weekends, especially over the summer, when making a reservation (€3.40 extra) is a good idea.

If you're travelling a lot on trains, you might want to get a **VORTEILScard**, which for around €100 a year gives you fifty percent **discount** on all rail travel and other services. Long-term residents might consider an **Österreichcard**, which gives a year's rail travel for €1690. Note that up to two **children** aged 5 and under travel for free, any extra kids and those aged from 6 to 14 travel half-price. Inter-urban trains have specific carriages set aside for those travelling with children. Another service offered by the ÖBB worth considering is the **Haus-Haus-Gepäck PLUS** which will take your **luggage** from your current hotel or pension to your next accommodation, for a fee of €14.90.

Most Austrian **train stations** are kept spotlessly clean, and offer a number of useful services. In towns and cities, they often harbour the only shops open after 6pm (or at all on a Sunday). Virtually every station also has a staffed **left-luggage office** and/or luggage lockers, as well as decent toilets and, more often than not, offers **bike rental**. Budget car rental is also available in Vienna, Linz, Salzburg and Innsbruck, where you can also hire a Smart car for €18 a day (€9 with a VORTEILScard).

Buses

Austria's **bus system** fills most of the gaps left by the rail network. As a general rule, *Postbus* services (Ⓦwww.postbus.at), depart from outside either the local train station or the post office, though often services call in at both.

Bus **fares** work out slightly cheaper than train fares, but along routes served by both forms of transport, however, you'll find that trains are almost invariably quicker. Buses come into their own on routes serving out-of-the-way, alpine villages, where they constitute a valuable lifeline for the local community, carrying mail as well as ferrying the local kids to and from school. Indeed, bus timetables often reflect the needs of the school day, with a flurry of departures in the early morning and early afternoon, compared to fewer services later in the day. Generally, bus services are almost non-existent on Sundays and public holidays, and are much reduced in the school holidays.

Tickets are usually bought from the bus driver, although it's possible to buy them in advance from the ticket window at larger bus stations. Twenty-four-hour **travelcards** (*Tageskarten*) for a particular route or zone are often cheaper than buying individual return tickets. A *Tageskarte* can usually be bought from the bus driver, though travel-cards of longer duration (*Netzkarten*) must be purchased from the ticket office of a bus or train station.

Boats

Passenger **boats** (*Schiffarht*) ply many of Austria's lakes and waterways, notably the Salzkammergut and Carinthian lakes and parts of the Danube. Operating times may

well be seasonal (most lake steamers tend to run from April or May to Sept), and ships are more often than not pleasure-oriented, duplicating routes which can be covered more cheaply and quickly by road or rail. However, if you have the time, a leisurely cruise across the Wolfgangsee, the trip over to Hallstaat, or down a stretch of the Danube, can be one of the most memorable and relaxed ways of sightseeing. Most ship services are run by private companies, though the ÖBB runs those on the Bodensee (Lake Constance) and the Wolfgangsee. Public transport passes (InterRail and Eurail passes, Austrian regional travelcards) are valid (or give discounts) on some but by no means all of the services.

Mountain transport

A remarkable number of Austrian summits can be accessed by public transport, and the view from the top is invariably superb. You'll come across the Standseilbahn or **funicular railway** and Zahnradbahn or **cog railway** (aka rack-and-pinion) in some resorts. In addition, there are various types of lift: Seilbahn, or single-cabin **cable car**, the Gondelbahn, or **gondola** (a succession of smaller four-seater cabins suspended from the same cable), and the open-air Sesselbahn, or **chairlift**. The rudimentary Schlepplift or T-bar lift is only used during the ski season.

Fares on these journeys vary enormously depending on the height to which you're climbing. Discounts are sometimes available if you hold a *Gästepass* or some kind of travel pass. Invariably, the ascent (*Bergfahrt*) is more expensive than the descent (*Talfahrt*), and a return is cheaper than the sum of the two. If you're here in the ski season, you'll need to buy a **ski pass** to get the best value (for more on which see p.50).

Driving

Travelling by **car** (*Auto* or *PKW*) is very straightforward in Austria. The roads are in general impeccably maintained, and there's an extensive system of **Autobahnen** linking all main cities and providing onward routes to neighbouring countries. Autobahnen are sometimes designated by name (the Salzburg–Villach *Tauern Autobahn*, for example), but more often by number. Note that the Austrian **road numbering system**, in which Autobahnen are prefixed by the letter A, conflicts with the European numbering system, whereby all main continental routes are prefixed with the letter E – you'll therefore find that the main A1 Salzburg–Vienna Autobahn is also marked on most maps as the E60. Main roads (Bundesstrasse) are usually marked in red on maps and designated by number; minor roads are usually marked in yellow and have no number.

All Austria's Autobahnen are subject to a single toll, which involves buying a **Vignette** (windscreen sticker) from the petrol stations or shops found at border posts when entering the country. You can also buy them from post offices and *Tabak* shops once inside the country. A ten-day Vignette costs €7.60 (and you'll need to buy a ten-day one even if you're merely passing straight through the country); a two-month Vignette €21.80. Motorbikers get a discount on all Vignettes. You don't need a Vignette at all, of course, if you intend to stick to normal main roads.

You **drive on the right** and **speed limits** are 50kph in built-up areas, 100kph on normal roads and 130kph on Autobahnen. You have to be eighteen to drive in Austria, and you must use dipped headlights during the day at all times; otherwise, most **driving rules** are fairly standard. Yellow diamond signs indicate who has priority at junctions, rather than road markings. Seatbelts must be worn (in the back seats as well, if you're in a car that has them fitted). The wearing of crash helmets is compulsory for motorbike riders. The permissible alcohol limit is 0.5 percent – roughly one 200ml glass of wine or 0.6l of beer. Watch out for trams in Austrian cities; it's forbidden to overtake them if they're at a stop without a pedestrian island. Another thing that can catch you out is that if you're turning right or left at traffic lights, you have to give way to pedestrians, who also have a "green man" giving them priority.

As far as **parking** is concerned, most urban areas have time-limited parking zones (*Kurzparkzone*), allowing a parking time of ninety minutes to three hours. If the parking is

free of charge, all you need to do is get hold of a cardboard clock (*Tolle Zeit* or *Zeitkarte*) on which you should then indicate your arrival time. If you have to pay up, either there will be a machine close by, or you'll need to purchase a sticker (*Parkschein*) from a *Tabak* shop or petrol station, which you must fill in and then display on the windscreen.

If you're bringing your own car, you need to make sure you have insurance to cover you for driving in Europe. You also need to carry **emergency equipment**, including a first-aid kit, a warning triangle and a visibility vest. If your car has the EU circle of twelve stars, you don't need a national sticker, but right-hand drive vehicles do need headlamp converters. As regards documentation, you need a valid EU **driving licence** or an international driving permit.

Motoring organizations

Australia AAA ⓣ02/6247 7311, ⓦwww.aaa.asn.au.
Austria ÖAMTC ⓣ0810/120 120, ⓦwww.oeamtc.at.
Canada CAA ⓣ613/820-1890, ⓦwww.caa.ca.
Ireland AA ⓣ01/617 9999, ⓦwww.aaireland.ie.
New Zealand AA ⓣ0800/500 444, ⓦwww.nzaa.co.nz.
UK AA ⓣ0800/887 766, ⓦwww.theaa.com.
USA AAA ⓣ1-800/AAA-HELP, ⓦwww.aaa.com.

Alpine routes

Most of the major **alpine routes** are kept open year-round, whatever the weather, but it's a good idea to carry snow chains in winter months if you're traversing alpine areas not served by Autobahnen. Road signs showing a white tyre on a blue background indicate that **snow chains** (*Schneeketten*) are compulsory. Several scenic, high-altitude mountain roads, usually marked as *Mautstrasse* on maps, are only open during snow-free months, and **tolls** (*Mauten*) are levied for their use. The Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse, which links the Salzburger Land with Carinthia and passes Austria's highest mountain along the way, is one of the most popular; opening times and prices for this and other scenic toll roads are detailed throughout this book.

Many of Austria's steep, winding trans-alpine roads are unsuitable for caravans or other trailers. Listed below are the major routes on which trailers are banned; you should refer to a good motoring map for details of the many minor roads in the Alps that are closed to trailers. Alternatively, contact your home motoring organization for details of which routes are recommended, or simply stick to the Autobahnen.

Principal alpine road routes closed to trailers

Enns Gorge (Weyer Markt–Hieflau)
Flexen Pass (Rauzalpe–Zürs–Lech–Warth)
Gerlos Pass (Zell am Ziller–Krimml)
Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse (Zell am See–Heiligenblut)
Hochtannberg Pass (Au–Warth)
Holzleiten Sattel (Nassereith–Telfs)
Loibl Pass (Klagenfurt–Slovenia)
Plöcken Pass (Kötschach–Italy)
Pötschenhöhe (Bad Ischl–Bad Aussee)
Seeberg Sattel, Carinthia (Eisenkappel–Slovenia)
Seeberg Sattel, Styria (Bruck an der Mur–Mariazell)
Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse (Partenen–Galtür)
Timmelsjoch Pass (Obergurgl–Italy)
Würzen Pass (Villach–Slovenia)

Car rental

All of the big international **car rental** (*Mietwagen*) companies have offices in most Austrian towns and at airports, and it's fairly easy to book a car in your home country before you travel – it's almost always cheaper to book from home and pick the car up at the airport. Typical charges are between €200–250 per week for a small car with unlimited mileage. Ask about any special deals, too, as it's often cheaper to rent over the weekend.

Cars rented within Austria should come with a valid Vignette (a windscreen sticker showing that Autobahn tax has been paid, see p.34) – it's a good idea to check this before driving off. You need to be at least 21 to rent a car, and have a clean driving licence. If you're thinking of popping over the border into Czech Republic, Hungary or Slovakia, you need to say so when you collect the car; some companies have restrictions on this, and most will slap a daily surcharge on top of the normal rental fee.

Car rental agencies

Avis US & Canada ⓣ1-800/331-1212, UK ⓣ0870/606 0100, Ireland ⓣ021/428 1111, Australia ⓣ13 63 33 or 02/9353 9000, New Zealand ⓣ09/526 2847 or 0800/655 111; ⓦwww.avis.com.
Budget US ⓣ1-800/527-0700, Canada ⓣ1-800/268-8900, UK ⓣ0870/156 5656, Australia ⓣ1300/362 848, New Zealand ⓣ0800/283 438; ⓦwww.budget.com.
easyCar ⓦwww.easycar.com.
Europcar US & Canada ⓣ1-877/940-6900, UK ⓣ0870/607 5000, Ireland ⓣ01/614 2800, Australia ⓣ393/306 160; ⓦwww.europcar.com.
Hertz US & Canada ⓣ1-800/654-3131, UK ⓣ020/7026 0077, Ireland ⓣ01/870 5777, New Zealand ⓣ0800/654 321; ⓦwww.hertz.com.
Holiday Autos UK ⓣ0870/400 4461, Ireland ⓣ01/872 9366, Australia ⓣ299/394 433, US ⓣ866/392-9288, South Africa ⓣ11/234 0597; ⓦwww.holidayautos.co.uk.
National US ⓣ1-800/CAR-RENT, UK ⓣ0870/400 4581, Australia ⓣ0870/600 6666, New Zealand ⓣ03/366 5574; ⓦwww.nationalcar.com.
Thrifty US & Canada ⓣ1-800/847-4389, UK ⓣ01494/751 500, Ireland ⓣ01/844 1950, Australia ⓣ1300/367 227, New Zealand ⓣ09/256 1405; ⓦwww.thrifty.com.

Cycling

Austria is a bicycle-friendly country, with **cycling** lanes in all major towns. There are also a large number of designated cycle routes out in the countryside; these include stretches of pedestrian- and cycle-only pathway, but more often consist of a separate lane by the roadside. Bikes can be taken on most local **trains**, but you need to purchase a separate ticket for them; for faster IC or EC trains, you should check the timetable for a bicycle symbol next to the train number. Most touristy places (and over 170 train stations) in Austria have **bike-rental** (*Fahrradverlieh*) outlets – usually requiring production of a passport or other photo-accompanied ID; prices usually start at around €15 a day. Details of where to rent bikes in the larger towns and resorts are given throughout the book.

Accommodation

Despite the high prices charged by hotels in Vienna and Salzburg, accommodation need not be expensive in Austria. Finding a room shouldn't present too many problems, either, although it can be a scramble in July and August, and in skiing areas at Christmas, New Year and around mid-February.

The majority of tourist offices will book accommodation on behalf of personal callers; other offices will supply you with an accommodation list and point you in the direction of a public telephone. Of the tourist offices who do book accommodation for you, some charge a small fee of no more than €3 and/or a deposit – in general, it's in the large cities that this extra charge is levied. The bigger tourist offices have accommodation lists on an information board (or touch-screen computer), either in the lobby or on the wall outside, for those who arrive during closing hours; these are often accompanied by a courtesy phone.

Inevitably, accommodation **prices** are subject to seasonal variations. Throughout the book, we've quoted peak summer prices, though an indication of what you might expect to pay in winter has been provided in alpine resorts where relevant. Whatever time of year you're here, you should always ask for a **Gästekarte** (guest card), as this perk for overnight visitors can give substantial discounts on local attractions and public transport.

Hotels and pensions

A high standard of cleanliness and comfort can be taken for granted in most Austrian

Room prices and availability, and periods of opening of tourist facilities – particularly in mountain resorts – depend on the season.

July and August are **summer high season** right across the country when prices are at their peak. In the cities, valleys and lake regions, the summer season stretches from May to September. However, in the mountain regions, the season is shorter: some alpine passes, cable cars and mountain railways don't open until June and may close as early as mid-September.

April and October are **low season** across the country. In the cities and valleys, cut-price deals are usually on offer, but in the mountains, some resorts close down altogether. The **winter season** is basically the ski season, which starts traditionally the week before Christmas and lasts until March. The **winter high season** is Christmas, New Year and – in the ski resorts at least – mid-February, with January and March correspondingly less crowded and less expensive.

hotels, also called a **Gasthof** (plural *Gasthöfe*) – there's little difference between the two terms, although use of the word *Gasthof* (originally used to describe a country inn offering both refreshment and lodging) is intended these days to connote a traditional, cosy *gemütlich* feel. Most hotels and *Gasthöfe* have restaurants offering food and drink throughout the day; a **Hotel-Garni** is a hotel that offers breakfast but no other meals. A **Gästehaus** is usually a small B&B hotel, not to be confused with a **Gasthaus**, which is merely a restaurant – unless, of course, it's followed by the words *mit Unterkunft* (with lodging).

The label **Pension** or *Frühstückspension* denotes a bed-and-breakfast hotel that, although self-contained, occupies one or more floors, but not the whole, of a larger building. Pensions tend to be small, family-run affairs, but there are no hard-and-fast rules as to what they look like or what they offer: those in the big cities tend to occupy several floors of a large apartment block, while those in country areas may well be in traditional, rustic houses.

Costs and standards

Hotels and pensions are graded on a **five-star scale**. The most basic, one-star places, offering simple rooms with shared toilets and bathrooms, are in very short supply, and rarely quoted in Austrian tourist-office literature. Most **budget accommodation** falls into the two-star category, offering rooms usually with en-suite shower and toilet (although some have en-suite toilet but shared shower) and a simple **continental breakfast** – typically a pot of coffee, bread rolls and jam. Generally speaking, pensions tend to fall into this category; some of Vienna's inner-city pensions, however, are luxury hotels in all but name. Outside of Vienna, in two-star hotels and most pensions, you can expect to pay €40–60 for a double with bathroom; slightly less for rooms with shared facilities.

Once beyond the two-star bracket, prices rise rapidly. Rooms in three-star places usually come with en-suite shower, telephone and cable or satellite TV, together with a larger as-much-as-you-can-eat **breakfast buffet** comprising cereals, cold meats and pastries. You should expect to pay €60–100 for a double in this category. Once you break into the four- and five-star brackets, you can expect bigger rooms, an expanded range of creature comforts, a larger bath to wallow in, and additional facilities like swimming pool, gym and sauna. Anything between €100 and €150 for a double is not unusual, with prestigious luxury hotels in Vienna and other big cities exceeding even this.

Note that **credit cards** are not accepted in many small hotels and pensions.

Private rooms and farmhouses

Staying in a **private room** (*Privatzimmer*), in the house of a local family, is another good option in many parts of Austria. While in many cases you'll be sharing a bathroom and eating your breakfast with the family, in others you might be in a reasonably self-contained part of the house. Most tourist offices keep extensive lists of private rooms

Accommodation terms

Komfortzimmer ("comfort room") rooms that have both en-suite bath/shower (*Bad/Dusche*) facilities and TV.
ÜF *Übernachtung mit Frühstück* bed-and-breakfast.
NF *Nächtigung mit Frühstück* bed-and-breakfast.
HP *Halbpension* half board.
VP *Vollpension* full board.
EZ *Einzelzimmer* single room.
DZ *Doppelzimmer* double room.
MZ *Mehrbettzimmer* room with three or more beds.

and will usually book one on your behalf; roadside signs offering *Zimmer frei* (vacancies) are also fairly common. Prices for a double room hover between €30 and €60.

Most tourist offices in small-town and rural Austria also book bed-and-breakfast rooms in local **farmhouses** (*Bauernhöfe*), where you can observe – or even help out – as the animals are fed or cheese is made in an alpine dairy. Most farmhouses offer either double rooms, family-size apartments (typically sleeping four to six) or a mixture of both. Double rooms in farmhouses cost no more than comparable private rooms, while apartments usually offer even better value. Prices usually include breakfast, but not always; some of the farmhouse apartments have self-catering facilities. Most farms prefer guests to stay for about a week, though you may get away with a stay of three or four days, if you're travelling outside the peak season.

Hostels

Youth hostels (known as a *Jugendherberge* or *Jugendgästehaus*) are fairly widespread in Austria – around a hundred in all. They're run by two separate national organizations, the Österreichischer Jugendherbergsverband (ÖJHV) and the Österreichischer Jugendherbergswerk (ÖJHW), although both are **Hostelling International** or **HI** (Ⓦwww.hihostels.com) affiliated and many can be booked in advance via the website. Hostels run by church organizations or private individuals can also be found in big cities like Vienna, Salzburg and Innsbruck. High standards of cleanliness and organization can be taken for granted, but such factors as number of people per room and range of facilities vary widely. Rural hostels tend to have large numbers of bunk beds crammed into a small number of rooms, while larger resorts and cities have a mixture of both multi-bed dorms and well-appointed double rooms with en-suite facilities. Overcrowding, however, can be a problem – especially during school holidays, when hostels everywhere are besieged by kids – so book in advance whenever possible.

Rates hover between €12 and €20 depending on how plush the hostel. If you're not already a member of an HI-affiliated youth hostel organization, an extra €3 or so will be charged, which will go towards paying for your guest membership card

Accommodation price codes

All hotels and pensions in this book have been coded according to the following **price categories**. All the codes are based on the rate for the least expensive double room during the summer season. In those places where winter is the high season, we've indicated both summer and winter room rates in the text.

1. €30 and under
2. €31–45
3. €46–60
4. €61–75
5. €76–90
6. €91–110
7. €111–130
8. €131–150
9. €151 and over

(*Gästekarte*) – after six visits you should then be a full guest member. Sheet **sleeping bags** are obligatory, and the cost of hiring one is often included in the overnight charge. A continental **breakfast** is also usually included in the price. In addition to breakfast, many hostels serve meals and snacks throughout the day in cafeteria-like surroundings, often at very competitive prices. Most hostels close during the day, and you're expected to check in either in the morning (before 10am) or in the evening (typically between 5 and 10pm); you may also be expected to vacate the premises at 9am on the dot, so be prepared. Outside the big cities, most hostels also operate a **curfew** at around 11pm, although in many cases you'll be given a key (often on payment of a small deposit) enabling you to come and go as you please.

Mountain huts

Highland areas of Austria are equipped with an extensive network of **mountain huts**, known as *Schutzhütte* or simply *Hütte*, catering for hikers and mountaineers. More than five hundred of these are run by the Austrian Alpine Club (Österreichischer Alpenverein, or ÖAV; see p.48), and an additional five hundred are either privately owned or belong to smaller mountain clubs. Originally intended as simple refuges, most huts these days are rather like mountain inns, offering a range of accommodation. Mixed-sex dormitories (bring your own sheet sleeping bag) are the norm, although two-bed rooms or family rooms are often available. The hut warden (*Pächter*) provides meals and sells assorted drinks – tea, coffee, hot chocolate, beer, wine and schnapps – but prices are likely to be higher than those charged down in the valley.

The **opening times** vary enormously from hut to hut, but most are open from July to September; a few open earlier and close later, and some may be open over the winter to provide accommodation during the ski season. Be aware, too, that some huts don't open every day. Huts are at their busiest from mid-July to mid-August, but **booking in advance** is rarely necessary. If you arrive to find that all the beds are taken, you'll be allocated an emergency bed (*Notlager*) – a mattress on the floor. Expect to pay around €8 for a *Notlager* bed; €12–20 for a dorm bed; €20–40 for a bed in a two-person room. A rudimentary **breakfast** (comprising bread, jam and tea or coffee) is usually available for an extra €8 or so. Members of the ÖAV (they have a branch in Britain; see p.48) receive a fifty percent reduction on the price of a bed in all ÖAV-administered huts. A list (in German) of all huts, their opening dates and facilities, can be found on the ÖAV website ⓦwww.oeav.at, and in book from the ÖAV's UK branch.

Camping

Austria's high standards of accommodation are reflected in the country's **campsites**, the vast majority of which are clean, well-run affairs offering laundry facilities, shops and snack bars, as well as toilet and shower facilities. The only drawback is their tendency towards over-regimentation, with a plethora of rules and regulations – it's usually forbidden to light fires, make noise between certain hours, and some sites lock the gates at lunchtime ensuring that no vehicle can get in or out. The larger sites often provide a wealth of activities and sports facilities – especially the lakeside sites of the Salzkammergut and Carinthia – and are good places to enjoy a family break; if you want to avoid a holiday-camp atmosphere, however, opt for a smaller, rural site. While most places cater just for tents and caravans, some sites offer four- to six-person bungalows. Sites usually open May to September only, although a great many in the winter resorts of western Austria never close. Prices vary enormously depending on the facilities available and the season. In general, you can expect to pay about €6 per person, €4–10 per pitch, plus €3–6 per vehicle. Use of electricity is usually €2–4 extra.

If you're planning to do a lot of camping, a **Camping Card International** or CCI (£4.75) is a good investment, available from the AA or the RAC in the UK, or from the Camping and Caravanning Club ⓣ0845/130 7632, ⓦwww.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk. In the **US and Canada**, the carnet is available from home motoring organizations, or from Family Campers and RVers or FCRV (ⓣ1-800/245-9755, ⓦwww.fcrv.org). FCRV

annual membership costs $25, and the carnet an additional $10. The carnet serves as useful identification, and many campsites will take it instead of making you surrender your passport during your stay. It covers you for third-party insurance when camping, and sometimes helps you get ten percent reductions or other incentives at camp sites listed in the CCI Information booklet that comes with your carnet.

Caravanners should note that some trans-alpine roads are considered unsafe for caravans. The principal routes to avoid are listed on p.35.

Food and drink

Austrian cuisine is remarkably multi-cultural, borrowing dishes from every corner of the old Habsburg Empire: goulash from Hungary, dumplings from Bohemia and even the *Wiener Schnitzel* from Lombardy. Menus are often a bit short on puddings and don't reflect Austria's chief contribution to global gastronomic culture – cakes and pastries. To partake of these calorific delights, you need to head for the many *Kaffehäuser* and *Konditoreien*.

Breakfast and snacks

Breakfast (*Frühstuck*) in Austria usually comprises a pot of tea or coffee, together with a couple of rolls with butter and jam – this is what you'll get if you're staying in a youth hostel, private room, pension or inexpensive hotel. One step up, a "full continental breakfast" means you should get a bit of choice, perhaps cold meats and cheeses and, if you're really lucky, a hot egg-based dish. Most hotels at mid-range and above offer a buffet breakfast, which means you can gorge yourself on as much cereal, muesli, eggs, bread, rolls, cheese and meats as you can eat. Most cafés will have a set breakfast menu (again, usually a pot of coffee and a couple of bread rolls and/or pastries) for around €5, and you can of course order extra bits and pieces separately.

If you're self-catering, then fresh round bread rolls (*Semmeln*) or finger rolls (*Stangerl*) bought from a supermarket or bakery (*Bäckerei*) are delicious, as are *Kipferl*, croissant-style pastries, or the slightly sweeter *Kolatschen*. **Bread** (*Brot*) is taken very seriously in Austria, and there is usually a wide variety of lovely crusty loaves on display in most bakeries. The standard loaf is *Hausbrot*, a mixture of wheat (*Weizen*) and rye (*Roggen*), often with caraway (*Kümmel*) or sunflower seeds (*Sonnenblumen*).

Austrian **snacks** centre on the ubiquitous *Würstelstand*, or **sausage** stand, which sells hot sausage (*Wurst*) as well as a few other things – usually French fries, soft drinks, canned beer and occasionally burgers. Numerous varieties of *Wurst* are available: *Frankfurter*, *Bratwurst* (fried sausage) or *Burenwurst* (boiled sausage) are the most common, but you could also try a *Debreziner*, a spicy Hungarian sausage, a *Currywurst*, which speaks for itself, a *Käsekrainer*, a sausage filled with blobs of molten cheese, or a *Bosna*, a thin and spicy Balkan sausage. To accompany your sausage, you usually get a roll (*Semmel*) and some mustard (*Senf*), which can be either *scharf* (hot) or *süss* (sweet).

Where to eat

The main meal of the day can often be taken in a **Kaffeehaus** or café (see *Coffee and cakes* colour section), although a larger choice of dishes will be offered by a restaurant or a **Gasthof** – the latter traditionally describing an inn, though nowadays use of the word merely implies that the establishment has a homely, traditional feel. A *Stübe*,

Cheap eats

For a cheap sit-down meal, budget travellers shouldn't overlook the cheap two-course **set menus** (*Mittagsmenü*) offered by many cafés at lunchtime, usually priced at around €8. Otherwise, you could try one of the **self-service restaurant** (*Selbstbedienung*) chains like Wienerwald (an upmarket fried chicken joint) and *Nordsee* (serving fish- and seafood-based snacks), which you'll find in most major towns, and which offer a slightly more central European alternative to the international burger chains. *Prima* is the biggest chain of self-service restaurants, with branches throughout Austria, and big town-centre department stores often have a self-service restaurant of their own. They're a good place to get a cheap meal, although surroundings are pretty uninspiring, and they're usually only open in the daytime, closing at around 6pm. Train station buffets usually offer reasonably inexpensive meals of the schnitzel and chips variety, although they're not always the kind of place that you'd want to sit down in for long. In Vienna, head for one of the self-service student *Mensen* (see p.136).

Billa is the largest national chain of **supermarket**, with outlets in most towns. Compared to other European countries, supermarkets are relatively modest in size, even in large towns. Nevertheless, since individually owned specialist food shops can be pretty thin on the ground, you'll probably find yourself relying on supermarkets if you're self-catering, or gathering picnic supplies. If you can, though, it's worth seeking out the weekly local **market**, often known as a *Bauernmarkt* (farmers' market), the best source of fresh local produce, and usually a good place for street snacks. Anker, the national bakery chain, is ubiquitous, and its bread and pastries are reliably good.

or **Stüberl** ("small room" or "parlour"), also denotes an eating venue with a traditional or cosy atmosphere. Other words for restaurant to look out for are **Gasthaus** and *Gastwirtschaft*. In mountain areas you can eat in an atmospheric, pine-clad **Hütte**, or *Almhütte* (literally "meadow-hut"), which will offer a modest range of food and drink to skiers in winter and walkers in summer.

For many Austrians, **lunch** (*Mittagessen*) rather than dinner (*Nachtmahl*) is the day's principal repast, although this doesn't usually affect the choice of food that you'll be offered in the evening. As a general rule, restaurants and *Gasthöfe* are open for lunch between noon and 2pm, and for dinner between 6 and 9.30pm, although in cities and tourist resorts many establishments remain open until 11pm or midnight.

Eating out need not be expensive. Standards are generally high wherever you choose to eat, and **price** differences from one establishment to the next are usually reflected in the decor, the choice of items on the menu, and the way in which the food is presented, rather than in the quality of ingredients. A hearty **soup** will set you back something in the region of €2.50–4, wherever you choose to eat. A **main course** of the schnitzel variety (with accompanying veg or salad) will cost €7–10 in the more unassuming restaurants, and will rarely rise above a ceiling of €15 even in plush establishments. The cheapest main courses on offer are often the combinations of cheese and pasta-style noodles (such as *Kasspätzln* or *Käsnudl*) so characteristic of Austrian rural cuisine. They're usually priced somewhere in the €6–8 bracket, and even the most upmarket restaurants will have at least one basic, inexpensive dish of this kind on the menu.

Most places will have a full **menu** (*Speisekarte*) of individually priced dishes, as well as a two- or three-course set menu (often chalked up on a board outside), which is often much better value. A *Mittagsmenü* is a lunchtime set menu, and a *Tagesmenü* is a set menu that's available all day. Note that you should make a mental note of any bread or rolls (*Gepäck*) you consume with your meal, as the waiter will ask you how many you've had before totting up the bill at the end.

Traditional cuisine

The most common starters (*Vorspeise*) are **soups**, such as *Frittatensuppe*, a clear soup containing small strips of pancake, *Leberknödelsuppe*, a clear beef broth with liver dumplings, *Gulaschsuppe*, a much more substantial, paprika-rich beef-and-vegetable soup, the sweet smelling *Knoblauchsuppe* or garlic soup, and *Serbische Bohnensuppe* (Serbian bean soup), a spicy affair that makes a good lunchtime meal on its own. Another common lunchtime light snack is *Bauernschmaus*, a platter of cold meats, slices of sausage and bread.

Most popular of the main dishes (*Hauptspeise*) are the **schnitzel** dishes (pan-fried cutlet), based on veal (*Kalb*) and pork (*Schwein*): *Wiener Schnitzel*, a veal or pork cutlet fried in breadcrumbs, is the most famous, although *Pariser Schnitzel* (fried in batter) and *Natur Schnitzel* (schnitzel fried on its own or with a creamy sauce) are also ubiquitous. The other classic Austrian dishes you'll find almost anywhere are *Backhendl*, chicken fried in breadcrumbs, *Schweinsbraten*, slices of roast pork, *Zwiebelrostbraten*, slices of roast beef liberally covered with fried onions, and *Tafelspitz*, a quintessentially Viennese dish of boiled beef, potatoes and horseradish sauce. Main courses like these usually come with potatoes and either vegetables or a small salad. Look out for the following traditional side dishes: *G'röstl* (*Rösti* or fried grated potato), *Knödel* (dumplings) and *Erdäpfelsalat*, boiled potatoes in a watery sweet and sour dressing.

In addition, most restaurants offer one or two **regional dishes** reflecting local rustic cuisine. The most common of these is the combination of pasta noodles and alpine cheese that goes under the name of either *Kasspätzln* or *Käsnockn*. In Carinthia, *Käsnudl* (large pieces of ravioli-like dough filled with cheese) almost enjoys the status of a national dish. Styrian cuisine, meanwhile, is characterized by liberal use of the delicious, nutty, dark *Kürbisöl* (pumpkin oil). Specialities to look out for in the Tyrol include *Schlipfkrapfen* (ravioli-like parcels with meat and/or potato filling), *Tiroler Knödel* (dumplings with small pieces of ham) and *Tiroler G'röstl* (grated onion, meat and potato fried in a pan). Traditional Austrian working-class dishes that sometimes appear on menus include *Schweinshaxe* (pork knuckle), *Stelze* (leg of veal or pork) and *Beuschel* (minced offal). The prevalence of **goulash** (*Gulasch* or *Gulyas*) is a Hungarian legacy, while the Italians make their presence known with dishes featuring *Nockerl*, a heavy version of pasta – *Schinkenfleckerl*, flecks of ham baked in pasta, is especially popular.

You'll find **fish** featured all over Austria, but especially in areas near lakes or mountain streams. Trout (*Forelle*) is by far the most common dish, although native pike (*Hecht*), carp (*Karpfen*) and pikeperch (*Fogosch*) are also popular, as is plaice (*Scholle*).

Vegetarians

Austria is hardly a paradise for **vegetarians**. In small restaurants and *Gasthöfe*, you might have to rely on omelettes, or dishes such as *Knödel mit Ei* (dumplings with scrambled egg) or *Gebackener Käse*, a slab of hard cheese (usually Emmenthal) covered in breadcrumbs and deep fried. Trendier, or more upmarket, establishments usually have a couple of more imaginative vegetarian choices on the menu: Strudel containing vegetables, spinach or cheese feature fairly often. Note, however, that most soups are based on meat stock. Regional dishes like *Kärntner Käsnudl* and *Kasspätzln* (see above) are usually completely meat-free, although some include small pieces of ham – ask before ordering. On a more positive note, look out for *Eierschwammerl*, chanterelle mushrooms that appear in various guises on menus in the late summer and autumn and are delicious. The main vegetarian alternative to Austria's stolid meat-and-potatoes cuisine is provided by pizzerias, which crop up in most settlements of any size – largely good-quality, inexpensive, authentic affairs producing pizzas on traditional Italian lines, and usually offering a wide range of pasta dishes as well.

Game (*Wild*) is popular throughout the year, but especially in autumn when the bulk of the hunting takes place and most restaurants in rural Austria offer a special game menu in the second half of October. The most common dishes are venison (*Hirsch*), chamoix (*Gems*) and roe deer (*Reh*), and sometimes *Wildschwein* (wild boar) crops up.

Seasonal menus are also worth looking out for: at Easter, you'll see dishes seasoned with *Bärlauch* (wild garlic); in May, freshly harvested *Spargel* (asparagus) appears almost everywhere; in summer, the puddings will feature summer fruits like *Ribiseln* (redcurrants); in autumn, wild mushrooms such as *Steinpilze* (porcini) and *Eierschwammerl* (chanterelles) feature on menus; *Kürbis* (pumpkins) are put to good use in October, and around St Martin's Day (Nov 11), you'll see *Gans* (roast goose) just about everywhere.

Obviously in a country with such a famous sweet tooth, there's no shortage of rich **desserts** (*Mehlspeisen*) on most menus. Apart from the omnipresent *Apfelstrudel*, *Palatschinken* (pancakes) filled with jam and/or curd cheese are a regular feature. Look out, too, for *Salzburger Nockerl*, stodgy, incredibly filling egg dumplings sprinkled with icing sugar, *Marillenknödel*, sweet apricot dumplings, and the politically incorrect but very tasty *Mohr im Hemd* – literally "Moor in a shirt" – a hot chocolate pudding with chocolate sauce and whipped cream.

Heurigen

An authentically Austrian place to do your drinking is in one of the country's many **Heurigen**, the wine taverns found predominantly in the former villages of Vienna's outer suburbs, on the slopes of the Wienerwald, and in the wine regions of Lower Austria, Burgenland and Styria. The word *heurig* means "this year's", as it was here that the vintner would encourage tastings in order to try and sell a few bottles of his (usually white) wine. In the good old days, people brought their own picnics to consume and sat on wooden benches in the vintner's garden whilst sampling the wine, but nowadays most Heurigen provide a self-service (usually, but not exclusively, cold) buffet of simple peasant fare. Traditionally, a visit is accompanied by *Schrammelmusik*, sentimental fiddle, guitar and accordion music, though today such entertainment only features at the more touristy spots. Real Heurigen are only permitted to open for 300 days in any one year, and may only sell wine and food produced on the premises. If the Heurigen is open, the custom is to display a *Buschen*, or bunch of evergreen boughs, over the entrance, with a sign telling you it's *ausg'stekt* ("hung out"). Those that still abide by the strict *Heurigen* laws generally have a sign saying *Buschenschank*, though it has to be said that some have now attained restaurant licences in order to open all year round. A display board at the centre of the smaller villages lists those *Heurigen* that are currently open; otherwise the local tourist office will have the details.

What to drink

Most Austrian **beer** is a high-quality brew of the light, continental-lager or pilsner type. Beers that you'll encounter throughout Austria, not just in their home region, are *Ottakringer* and *Gold Fassl* from Vienna, *Gösser* from Leoben in Styria, *Stiegl* from Salzburg, *Villacher* from Villach and *Puntigamer* from Graz. Smaller breweries still have big influence locally: *Weitrabräu* from Weitra in Lower Austria; *Murauer*, from Murau in Styria; and *Fohrenburg*, from Bludenz in Vorarlberg are worth looking out for. Many Austrian breweries produce speciality beers alongside their regular brews, such as *Märzen*, a slightly stronger, maltier concoction than the norm, and *dunkel Bier* (dark beer), a sweeter, porter-like beer. In addition, many Austrian bars serve foreign beer on draught, especially the excellent Czech brands *Budvar* and *Pilsener Urquell*, as well as international favourites like *Guinness*. Beer is generally drunk by the half-litre, known as a *Grosser Bier* or *Krügerl*, but you can also ask for a third of a litre, a *Kleiner Bier* or *Seidl*, a fifth of a litre, *Pfiff*, and occasionally a *Mass*, or litre jug. Draught beer is *Bier vom Fass*, and is cheaper than buying either Austrian or imported bottled beers – of which most bars offer an impressive selection. *Weissbier* (wheat beer) – usually bottled, but occasionally draught – is also worth trying: it's extremely fizzy, and you must pour it painfully slowly to avoid creating a vast head.

Wine runs beer a close second as Austria's favourite alcoholic tipple. A wide range is available in bars, restaurants and cafés everywhere, but in the main wine-producing areas, the best place to try the local wine is in a *Heuriger* or a *Buschenshenk* (wine tavern; see p.43). Wine is drunk by the *Viertel* (a 25cl mug) or the *Achterl* (a 12.5cl glass). The majority of wine produced in Austria is white, the dry, fruity *Grüner Veltliner* being the most popular. Look out, too, for *Sturm*, the half-fermented young wine that hits the streets and bars in autumn. Most red wine hails from Burgenland, where the most sought-after is *Blaufränkisch*.

Common to the apple-growing areas of Austria – mostly Styria and Carinthia – is a drink called *Most*, drier than cider and slightly less alcoholic. Austrians are also extraordinarily fond of **spirits**, particularly *Schnapps*, made in a variety of delicate fruit flavours and occasionally known as *Obstler*. Many towns and villages produce their own brand of *Obstler* – especially in the south, where fruit orchards abound – and it's a good idea when you're drinking or dining out to ask which local variety the staff recommend.

The media

Heavily subsidized by the state, the Austrian press is for the most part conservative and pretty uninspiring. The same goes for the TV channels – in fact the majority of Austrians with cable or satellite, choose to watch foreign (mostly German) channels.

The Austrian press

In central and eastern Austria, half the population reads the populist *Kronen Zeitung* tabloid, while plenty of the rest read another right-wing tabloid, *Kurier*. Of the qualities, the liberal *Der Standard*, printed on pink paper, tends to support the Social Democrats (SPÖ) while the rather strait-laced *Die Presse* backs the conservative People's Party (ÖVP). The aforementioned papers are considered to be Vienna-centric by many folk outside the capital, hence the popularity in western Austria of two major regional dailies, the Salzburg-based *Salzburger Nachtrichten*, and Innsbruck's *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, both of which are again fairly conservative. One peculiarly Austrian phenomenon are the bags of newspapers you'll find hung from lampposts. Law-abiding citizens take one and put their money in the slot provided.

Vienna boasts a good **weekly listings** tabloid, *Falter* (Ⓦwww.falter.at), which is lively, politicized and critical, and comes out on a Friday. Although it's entirely in German, it's easy enough to decipher the listings. The national and regional dailies also have limited listings of what's on in their particular area. Nearly all cafés and bars, and the traditional Viennese coffeehouses, have a wide selection of newspapers and magazines for patrons to browse through, occasionally even English-language ones.

Austrian TV and radio

Austrian **television** is unlikely to win any international awards for cutting-edge programming or presentation. There are just two **state-run channels**: ÖRF 1 and ÖRF 2, with only one really dreadful commercial alternative, ATV, for competition. As a result, Austrians tend to tune into German channels such as ARD and ZDF for a bit of variety. Many hotels and pensions have satellite TV, bringing the joys of CNN and MTV straight to your room.

The state-run **radio** channels all feature a lot of chattering, though Ö1 (87.8/92FM)

offers some decent classical music, in addition to news in English at 8am, followed shortly after by news in French. FM4 (103.8FM) broadcasts in English until 2pm, plays indie/dance music, with hourly news and weather in English during the day.

Foreign media

You'll find the full range of foreign newspapers at kiosks in city centres, large train stations and more touristy resorts. In Vienna, Salzburg and Innsbruck, you can usually get the European edition of the British broadsheet The Guardian, printed in Frankfurt, by mid-morning the same day. Similarly, the International Herald Tribune is printed in Europe and available the same day, and contains a useful distilled English version of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Elsewhere in Austria, foreign papers tend to be a day or two old. The weekly English-language newspaper Austria Today is available at most news stands, and gives a fairly dull rundown of Austrian news, plus a few listings. Ether is a slick monthly magazine for English-speaking expats, also available online (Ⓦ www.ethermagazine.at).

The **BBC World Service** (Ⓦ www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice) broadcasts in English on 100.8FM in Vienna, though you can also receive it on short wave. Also available on short wave is Radio Austria International, which broadcasts Austrian news in English between 1 and 2pm.

Festivals

Vienna and Salzburg tend to hog the limelight as far as cultural festivals are concerned, but many provincial centres also host festivals of music and theatre that attract top international performers and enjoy a global reputation. There is also a full calendar of local religious festivals, many of which have their roots in rural folk customs that pre-date Christianity. Below are some of the most important festivals – further information on how to obtain tickets is included in the relevant sections of the main text.

January

1 Vienna – New Year's Day Concert (*Neujahrskonzert*). The Vienna Philharmonic's world-famous, schmaltzy Strauss-fest is broadcast live around the world from the Musikverein (and beamed live onto a large screen on the front of the Rathaus). Ⓦ www.wienerphilharmoniker.at.

5 Pongau, Salzburger Land – Perchtenlauf evening processions take place all over western Austria, mostly famously in the Pongau region. Folk parade through the streets as *Schönperchten* (kindly spirits) and *Schiachperchten* (evil spirits), wearing elaborate head-dresses, in the hope of ensuring good fortune and good harvests in the coming year. See p.404.

5 Ebensee, Salzkammergut – during the *Glöcklerlaufen*, the men of the community don giant tissue-paper head-dresses illuminated from within by lanterns, and rush around warding off evil spirits. See p.442.

late Salzburg – Mozartwoche; a week of Mozart music-making celebrating the composer's birthday. Ⓦ www.mozarteum.at. See p.395.

February

mid Around Austria – Fasching (the ball season) – at its most lavish in Vienna – reaches its climax during the Carnival season, which ends on Shrove Tuesday (*Faschingsdienstag*). The final weeks are marked by lavish society balls in Vienna, Salzburg and other major cities and towns. Ⓦ www.ballkalender.info.

March

late Sölden, Tyrol – Gay Snowhappening is an annual week-long gay and lesbian romp in the snow. Ⓦ www.soelden.com.

Easter, Whitsun & Corpus Christi

moveable festivals Around Austria – Easter (*Oster*), Whitsun (*Pfingsten*) and Corpus Christi (*Fronleichnam*), all provide the excuse for long-weekend holidays and family outings. Corpus Christi is marked by religious processions in the Salzkammergut towns of Traunkirchen and Hallstaat – in both cases, celebrants take to the waters of nearby lakes in flotillas of tiny boats.

May

until mid-June Vienna – Wiener Festwochen is a cultural festival featuring opera, music and theatre from all over the world. It kicks off with a free concert in front of the Rathaus. Ⓦ www.festwochen.or.at.

June

mid Schwarzenberg, Vorarlberg – Schubertiade; top-notch orchestral and chamber music festival in a beautiful village setting, with a strong Schubert bias. Ⓦ www.schubertiade.at. See p.542.

until July Graz, Styria – Styriarte is the Styrian capital's month-long classical music festival which focuses each year on one composer. Ⓦ www.styriarte.com. See p.283.

until July Vienna – Jazz Fest Wien; the two-week jazz festival starts in late June and takes place across the city's jazz clubs and other live music venues. Ⓦ www.klangbogen.at.

July

early Lockenhaus, Burgenland – prestigious Kammermusikfest (chamber music festival) established by violinist Gideon Kremer. Ⓦ www.kammermusikfest.at. See p.261.

early Salzburg – Sommer Szene; two weeks of experimental theatre, dance and rock. Ⓦ www.sommerszene.net.

mid Nickelsdorf, Burgenland – the Nova Rock Festival is currently the country's biggest rock festival. Ⓦ www.novarock.at.

mid St Pölten, Lower Austria – Nuke is one of Austria's top open-air rock festivals. Ⓦ www.nuke.at.

mid Seeboden, Carinthia – the mind-boggling World Bodypainting Festival takes place over a week in this southern lakeside resort. Ⓦ www.bodypainting-festival.com.

until August Mörbisch – the Seefestspiele features operetta performed on an open-air stage on the shores of the Neusiedler See. Ⓦ www.seefestspiele-moerbisch.at

until August Bregenz, Vorarlberg – the Bregenzer Festspiele; opera performed outdoors on a floating stage on the Bodensee. Ⓦ www.bregenzerfestspiele.com See p.535.

late Wiesen, Burgenland – three-day outdoor jazz festival in the "Austrian Woodstock", 15km southwest of Eisenstadt. Ⓦ www.wiesen.at.

until Aug Salzburg – the Salzburger Festspiele is the most renowned – and the least accessible – arts festival in the country, with theatre, opera and symphonic music, and usually some Mozart. Ⓦ www.salzburgfestival.at. See p.395.

August

mid Innsbruck – the Innsbruck Festwochen is an early music festival that takes place in and around the city, leisurely spaced over the course of three weeks. Ⓦ www.altemusik.at.

mid Vienna – Donauinselfest is a free weekend pop festival held on Vienna's Donauinsel, sponsored by the Social Democrats (SPÖ). Ⓦ www.donauinselfest.at.

September

early Eisenstadt, Burgenland – the *Haydntage* is a ten-day festival of Haydn's music set in the town's glorious Schloss. Ⓦ www.haydnfestival.at. (See p.247).

early Linz, Upper Austria – Festival Ars Electronica features electronic, avant-garde music, installations and virtual art at the city's groovy digital arts museum. Ⓦ www.aec.at. See p.223.

until Oct Graz, Styria – Steirischer Herbst is an avant-garde music, theatre, film and art festival.

until Oct Linz, Upper Austria – the *Brucknerfest* opens in late Sept with a big laser and fireworks display, and is devoted to local-boy Anton Bruckner and contemporary composers. Ⓦ www.brucknerhaus.at. See p.227.

October

early alpine regions – festivals take place (usually called *Alpabtrieb* or *Almabtrieb*) marking the descent of the cattle herds from the high mountain pastures where they spend the summer. See p.8 & p.498.

mid Styria, Lower Austria & Burgenland – a pumpkin festival (*Kürbisfest*) takes place in just about every town in the country's agricultural heartlands.

late Vienna – the city's film festival, the Viennale, takes place over two weeks at the end of Oct. Ⓦ www.viennale.or.at.

until Nov Vienna – Wien Modern; contemporary classical music festival. Ⓦ www.wienmodern.at.

November

1 Around Austria – All Saints' Day (*Allerheiligen*) is taken seriously across the country, with hordes heading out to the cemeteries to pay their respects to the dead.

mid Graz, Styria – the four-day international Berg und Abenteuer Filmfestival (Mountain and Adventure Film Festival) takes place in Austria's second city.

until Dec Around Austria – Christkindlmarkt; wooden stalls selling gifts and *Glühwein* are set up in towns and cities across the country in the four weeks leading up to Christmas.

December

4 Eisenerz & Leoben, Styriua and other mining towns – The Feast of St Barbara, patron of miners and tunnellers, is celebrated in mining areas (such as at the Styrian towns of Leoben and Eisenerz) with parades and special church services, either on the day itself (Dec 4) or on the nearest Sun.

5 Around Austria – St Nicholas Eve sees St Nicholas go round handing out gifts for children. Meanwhile the devil (*Krampus*) – demonically masked males – run through the streets to symbolize the evil spirits chased away by the goodly St Nicholas (often accompanied by an angel).

mid Around Austria – *Sternsinger* (carol singers dressed as the Three Wise Men) go from house to house collecting money for charity. A record of their visit is chalked above the door of each household: "K + M + B" to denote Kaspar, Melchior and Balthazar – it's considered unlucky to wipe the marks off until the following year's visit.

Outdoor activities

Whatever the season, if you're looking for an active outdoor holiday you'll be spoilt for choice in Austria. In summer, well-maintained footpaths and expansive mountain scenery make it something of a paradise for walkers. Fast-flowing alpine rivers and tranquil lakes offer a great range of water-based pursuits, and most holiday resorts of any size cater to tennis, swimming and golf enthusiasts. In winter, wherever you are in alpine parts, you'll be in striking distance of a winter sports centre of one sort or another. Winter sports have deep roots in Austria, and locals will ski or snowboard anywhere where there's a serviceable slope. The season generally lasts from early December to early April, though skiing and snowboarding are possible all the year round on a small number of high-mountain glaciers.

Walking

Austria offers some of the finest **walking** (*Wandern*) terrain in Europe. Variety is the order of the day, with lowland walks in the east of the country, and gently rolling hills in southern Styria, Upper Austria and Lower Austria, contrasting sharply with the more challenging alpine regions in the centre and west of the country. Tracks are for the most part well marked and well maintained, and numerous well-positioned signposts often include an estimation of how long a particular route will take.

In alpine Austria, much of the tourist infrastructure developed for the winter sports crowd is available for ramblers and hikers in the summer, and the basic forms of mountain lift (cable cars, gondolas and chairlifts; see p.50) are often pressed into service from late spring until early autumn in order to convey sightseers and walkers to higher altitudes. Walks that require spending a night or more on the mountain utilize the network of mountain huts (*Hütte*), which provide rudimentary dorm accommodation in mountain areas (see p.39). Some huts are privately owned, but most are run by the Österreichischer Alpenverein (ÖAV) or their affiliates. Details of some all-day mountain walks and more

ambitious hut-to-hut walks are included in this guide.

Planning your walk

Whatever level of walking you intend to do, a good **map** is essential. If you buy a 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 map, walking routes are usually marked in red and numbered (as they are on the ground). Some maps differentiate between well-marked paths and insufficiently marked paths; others differentiate according to the level of difficulty, dividing the paths into *Wanderweg* (hiking trail), *Wanderpfad* (steep hiking trail) and *Steig* (climbing trail).

In the Tyrol, and other alpine areas, **paths** are marked according to a colour scheme: tracks marked in blue are usually on the flat, or involve a gentle ascent; those in red involve steeper gradients. However, on no account should you set off to tackle a **black route** unless you're an experienced walker, or you're in the company of someone who is. Black routes are either high-altitude tracks prone to year-round snow and ice, involve a sheer drop on one or both sides of the track, or include scrambling or climbing (usually protected with cables). One good way of getting an introduction to walking in the Alps is to join one of the many guided walks organized by tourist offices throughout Austria in the summer. Sometimes these are free, but you can usually expect to pay €6–10 per person for a half-day walk.

Always check the weather forecast before setting out, as **mountain weather** can change rapidly. Even if you're merely going on a cable-car ride to the summit of some local peak in order to enjoy the view and embark on a brief amble, it's worth taking a pullover and a waterproof jacket at the very least. For anything more ambitious than this, windproof and waterproof clothing is essential. Choosing the right footwear is of prime importance, too: trainers are only really adequate for a short walk on the flat, and you'd be foolish to attempt walks of any duration in alpine regions without a good pair of walking boots.

Paths known as **Klettersteig** have sections with steps and/or ropes or cables to hang on to. Signs announcing *nur für Geübte* warn that the route is for experienced walkers only. Be extra vigilant when crossing mountain streams, patches of snow or exposed rocks. Avoid straying onto glaciers and snowfields unless accompanied by a mountaineer who is experienced in glacier travel and has the necessary equipment to deal with crevasse rescue.

You should never embark on a walk that can't reasonably be completed well before dusk. Gauging **distance** that can be covered depends on many variables, including terrain, fitness levels, weight being carried and so on. Reasonably fit people carrying a light rucksack should be able to manage 4.5km per hour on the flat, plus an additional hour for every 350m of ascent. Don't be too proud to turn back should the weather deteriorate or the route become difficult or dangerous. If you do make it to the summit, you'll probably find a little wooden box containing a stamp (to prove you've been there) and/or visitors' book, so you can record your feat for posterity.

For those on all-day or **hut-to-hut walks**, the list of what to take with you increases. Although signposts and waymarks are frequent in most areas, it's prudent to carry a good map and compass – and know how to use them. A first-aid kit, whistle and torch should also be taken in case of emergencies. Carry food for the day, including emergency rations and at least one litre of liquid per person. Leave a note of your itinerary and expected time of return with a responsible person, and when using mountain huts enter the route details in the book provided. If unable to reach the destination at which you're expected, try to send a message to prevent the mountain rescue team being called out. Mountain rescue can

Austrian Alpine Club

Österreichischer Alpenverein
Ⓣ0512/59547, Ⓦwww.alpenverein.at.
UK branch: Austrian Alpine Club
Ⓣ01929/556 870, Ⓦwww.aacuk.org.uk.

Members are entitled to a fifty percent reduction on accommodation in all alpine huts run by the ÖAV. Membership costs £36 per year (£27 for under 26s and over 60s; £15 for under 18s).

International Distress Signal

If you get into trouble, the **International Distress Signal** is six quick blasts on a whistle (or flashes with a torch) followed by a minute's pause. Then repeat. The response is three signals followed by a minute's silence.

be very expensive, and it won't be covered by most regular travel insurance policies. If you're devoting all or most of your holiday to serious walking in the Alps, it's a good idea to ask a travel agent or insurance company about getting specific cover for what you're doing. Membership of the Austrian Alpine Club includes worldwide mountain accident rescue cover.

Lake and river activities

Austria's many **lakes** serve as centres of warm-weather sporting action – predominantly the lakes of the Salzkammergut, the Wörthersee, Ossiachersee and Millstättersee in Carinthia, and the Neusiedler See in Burgenland. All of the above are well equipped with **windsurfing** (*Windsurfen*) and **sailing** (*Segeln*) schools, the latter usually offering a range of courses in a variety of craft. Courses in all disciplines tend to last a week, although shorter, two-day crash courses are often available. Expect to pay around €200 for seven days. Courses will be in German and, although not all instructors speak English, most schools will make an effort to tailor what they offer to suit your needs. The majority of sailing and windsurfing schools rent out surfboards and boats to those who already have experience. On the larger lakes, **waterskiing** (*Wasserskisport*) and paraskiing are usually on offer.

Scuba diving (*Sporttauchen*) is a popular activity in the lakes of the Salzkammergut, although each lake only allows diving in designated areas, and at certain times of the year (transgressors will be fined). A one-day course should cost around €50, a seven-day marathon €500.

Rafting

Rafting is an increasingly popular activity on the fast-flowing rivers of the Tyrol, and involves sharing a large dinghy with a ten- to fifteen-strong group of people and hurtling downstream. The dinghy is captained by a local guide, and safety equipment (such as lifejackets) is provided. A trip usually costs around €50 per person depending on duration, and you can often choose between travelling a mild stretch of the river, or a more fast-flowing one – children under a certain age may be excluded from the latter.

The main centres for rafting are the towns of Imst and Landeck on the River Inn, Taxenbach near Zell am See, and the village of Sölden in the Ötztal – most tourist resorts in western Austria run regular trips to these centres, so you don't have to stay there to take part. These areas are also popular for canoeing and kayaking, and it's fairly easy to rent equipment and obtain advice on which stretches of the river you can use once you arrive – local tourist offices are the obvious starting point for enquiries, although other contact addresses are given in the Guide where relevant.

Fishing

It's relatively easy to indulge in a spot of **fishing** (*Angeln* or *Fischen*) on Austria's lakes and rivers, even if you're only spending a day or two in a particular area. Tourist offices should be your first point of contact when enquiring about where to fish and where to hire equipment. You'll have to buy a fishing licence (*Amtliche Fischerkarte*) – the tourist office will sell you one, or at least point you in the direction of a local sports shop where they're available. The cost of a licence often depends on whether you're intending to fish from dry land or from a boat: for the former, expect to pay €20 per day, €75 per week.

Winter sports

Winter sports are something of an Austrian national obsession. For those living in alpine areas, they're often a major recreational activity and the country has twice been very proud to host the Winter Olympics, held in Innsbruck in 1964 and 1976. The emphasis is very much on **downhill skiing** – which has a phenomenal infrastructure and lures thousands of foreign visitors every year – and is described more fully in the colour section.

Global warming

It's not a subject that many in the ski industry like to talk about, but if **global warming** continues, according to the latest forecasts, the prospects for skiing could be bleak. No industrial country in the world is as dependent on skiing as Austria, where the industry generates around five percent of the country's GNP. Worse still, three quarters of the country's ski lifts are situated below 1000m, where the snow is most vulnerable to rising global temperatures. To find out whether there's any snow on your piste, log on to ⓦwww.onthesnow.com.

However, other sports, particularly **cross-country** (nordic) skiing are common anywhere there's enough snow and most ski resorts maintain trails on the valley floor below their main slopes. Ramsau above Schladming and the Zugspitze region of the Tyrol – around Seefeld and Ehrwald – offer some of the best trail networks, although most resorts are fine if you're just after a couple of lessons and a taster session. Few travel companies offer specific cross-country packages but you can always book a standard skiing trip to a mainstream resort like Schladming or Zell am See, and then register for a cross-country skiing course once there.

Lifts, passes and costs

Access to the slopes is provided by a variety of lifts. Single journeys are quite expensive, but **ski passes** – that entitle you to unlimited lift use in a specific area over a certain period of time – are always offered. Passes are usually available by the day up to a period of thirty days. Some resorts also sell passes that allow you to take days off, rather than commit to consecutive days, which can be useful if you'd rather spend the occasional day by the fire, doing some sightseeing or going for a walk rather than pounding the slopes every day. **Prices** vary between areas and are depend on how fashionable the resort is and how big an area the pass covers. One-day ski passes rarely fall below the €25 mark, with most around €40, though discounts are offered if you buy later in the day. A six-day ski pass for the low-key resorts of western Carinthia and the East Tyrol, might cost around €150, whereas the same in trendy St Anton – and covering the whole Arlberg region – weighs in at €200 – but is so wide-ranging that it's undoubtedly worth it if you're an experienced skier keen to cover a lot of ground.

Ski/snowboard and boot rental for six days will probably set you back around €130. If you're a beginner, you'll also have to budget for tuition, with six days' worth of lessons (usually about 4hr of tuition a day) costing something in the region of €110–140. Beginners' snowboarding courses usually last about three days and cost upwards of €100.

Eisstockschiessen

One popular sport that you'll see a lot of in alpine areas over the winter is **Eisstockschiessen**, which (rather like curling) involves sliding heavy objects down a sheet of ice. Most towns and villages will have an area set aside for this – enquire at local tourist offices if you're interested in either watching or taking part.

Travel essentials

Addresses

When writing **addresses**, the Austrians write the name of the street, and then the house number; many residential addresses also include an apartment number, separated from the house number by a slash or dash. For example: Löblichgasse 11/14, denotes Flat 14 at no. 11 Löblichgasse. Next comes the postal code, with an "A" (for Austria) hyphenated to the beginning. Lastly, there are a few common abbreviations to be aware of, including: –str. for –strasse, –g. for –gasse, and –pl. for –platz.

Beaches

Austria's many lakes usually have a bathing **beach** (*Strand*), and some rivers – notably the Danube in and around Vienna – provide popular swimming areas as well. You can't just jump in anywhere, though, and bathing is usually restricted to a specific area known as a *Strandbad* (plural *Strandbäder*), where you'll find a stretch of waterfront, a grassy area on which to lay your towel, changing cubicles and a snack stall or café. Some Strandbäder are free, but most charge about €2–3 per day. Austrians are very keen naturists, and you'll find a nudist section at most outdoor swimming spots; just follow (or steer clear of) the signs saying FKK (*Freikörperkultur*).

Costs

Although Austria is by no means a budget destination, it is not quite as **expensive** as people imagine. It's true that coffee and cake at a traditional coffeehouse will cost you dear, but restaurants on the whole are moderately priced, as is accommodation. That said, Austria is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and if you have the money, there are plenty of luxury shops, hotels and restaurants ready to relieve you of it. After you've paid for your own room, count on a minimum of €30 a day, which will buy you breakfast, a takeaway lunch, a budget dinner and a beer or coffee, but not much else. Eating sit-down meals twice a day, visiting museums and drinking more beer and coffee (especially coffee) will cost you more like €60 a day; if you want to go to the opera or a club, then you could easily double that figure.

Crime and personal safety

The Austrians are a law-abiding lot, almost obsessively so. Few people drop litter, and no one jaywalks. That said, crime does, of course, exist and is on the rise, so it's as well to take the usual precautions. Almost all problems encountered by tourists in Austria are to do with petty crime. Reporting thefts to the **police** is straightforward enough, though it takes some time to wade through the bureaucracy. The Austrian police (*Polizei*) – distinguishable by their dark blue uniforms and white peaked caps, with a red and gold band – are armed, and are usually civil. It's important to carry ID with you at all times, ideally your passport, or at the least a driving licence. Making photocopies of your passport and tickets is a very sensible precaution.

Travellers with disabilities

Like most EU countries, there are regulations in force in Austria that mean that all public buildings must be **wheelchair-friendly** (*Rollstuhlfreundlich*). As a result the country is becoming gradually more accessible for travellers with special needs. Wheelchair access to **hotels** is by no means universal, however, and is more likely in upmarket establishments than inexpensive places. Access to the country's **public transport** system is improving and hassle-free if you plan your trip and contact the relevant train station several days in advance. Access to urban transport is patchy, with only the new subway lines in Vienna fully equipped with lifts, escalators and a guidance system for the blind. The country's new generation of

low-floor trams are wheelchair-friendly, and most buses now "kneel" to let people on and off, and have retractable ramps for wheelchair users. If you're visiting Vienna, phone for the English-language leaflet *Vienna for Visitors with Disabilities* from the Austrian tourist board (see p.55) before you set off. This describes the level of access to U-Bahn stations, hotels and many tourist sights, and contains lots of other useful pieces of information. If you're visiting the Tirol, check out the website ⓦwww.easyaccess.tirol.at.

Discounts

Most sights and some cinemas and theatres in Austria offer **concessions** for senior citizens, the unemployed, full-time students and children under 16, with under-5s being admitted free almost everywhere – proof of eligibility will be required in most cases. Once obtained, **youth/student ID cards** soon pay for themselves in savings. Full-time students are eligible for the International Student Identity Card or ISIC (ⓦwww.isiccard.com), which entitles the bearer to special air, rail and bus fares, and discounts at museums, theatres and other attractions. The card costs £7 in the UK; €13 in the Republic of Ireland; $22 in the US; C$16 in Canada; A$18 in Australia; and NZ$20 in New Zealand. If you're not a student, but you are 25 or younger, you can get an International Youth Travel Card, or IYTC, which costs the same as the ISIC and carries the same benefits.

Electricity

Electricity is continental 220 volts AC; standard round two-pin plugs are used. Equip yourself with an adapter/transformer before leaving home if you want to use your hairdryer, laptop etc, while travelling.

Embassies and consulates

Australia 4, Mattiellistr 2–4 ⓣ506 740, ⓦwww.australian-embassy.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz.
Canada 1, Laurenzerberg 2 ⓣ531 38-3000, ⓦwww.kanada.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz.
Ireland 1, Fifth Floor, Rotenturmstr 16–18 ⓣ715 4246; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz
UK 3, Jaurèsgasse 10 ⓣ71613-5333, ⓦwww.britishembassy.at; tram #71.
US 9, Boltzmanngasse 16 ⓣ31339, ⓦwww.usembassy.at; tram #5, #33, #37, #38, #40, #41 or #42.

Emergencies

Fire ⓣ122
Police ⓣ133
Ambulance ⓣ144

Entry requirements

Citizens of the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and all European countries (except Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine) do not require an entry **visa** for Austria. EU citizens need only a national identity card and can stay for as long as they want, but if they're planning on staying permanently they should register with the local police. Citizens of the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia require a passport, and can stay up to three months. Visa requirements do change, however, and it is always advisable to check the current situation before leaving home.

Football

Despite the fact that **football** is the most popular team sport in Austria, the country has enjoyed very little success at club or national level. The top division is the ten-team Bundesliga (ⓦwww.oefb.at), where teams play each other twice at home and twice away; the season lasts from July to June with a long winter break. Rapid Wien has won the championship the most times, though only once in the last ten years.

Health

EU health care privileges apply in Austria, so on production of a passport you are entitled to free emergency **hospital** treatment. On production of a European Health Insurance Card or EHIC (ⓦwww.ehic.org.uk), you can also visit the doctor free of charge – phone ⓣ513 95 95 to find an English-speaking doctor. Most **pharmacies** (*Apotheken*) are open Monday to Friday 8am to noon and 2 to 6pm, Saturday 8am to noon; all of them should have directions to the nearest 24-hour pharmacy posted in the window.

Insurance

Even though EU health care privileges apply, it's as well to take out a **travel insurance policy** to cover against theft, loss and illness or injury. For non-EU citizens, it's worth checking whether you are already covered before you buy a new policy. If you need to take out insurance, you might want to consider the travel insurance offered by Rough Guides. Rough Guides has teamed up with Columbus Direct to offer insurance policies that can be tailored to suit your needs. Products include a low-cost **backpacker** option for long stays; a **short break** option for city getaways; a typical **holiday package** option; and others. There are also annual **multi-trip** policies for those who travel regularly. Different sports and activities (trekking, skiing, and so on) can usually be covered if required. See ⓦwww.roughguidesinsurance.com for eligibility and purchasing options. Alternatively, call the following numbers: UK ⓣ0870/033 9988; Australia ⓣ1300/669 999; New Zealand ⓣ0800/559 911. If you live outside these three countries, call ⓣ+44 870/890 2843.

Internet

The Austrians are keen Internet users and most cafés, restaurants, hotels, shops and museums have websites. With any luck the hotel or hostel you're staying at will have **internet access**. Otherwise, you can get online at numerous cafés and bars in towns and cities across Austria – some even have Wi-Fi, known locally as WLAN. For details of how to get your laptop online when abroad, check out the useful website ⓦwww.kropla.com.

Maps

The maps in this guide, together with the untold number of **free city plans** you'll pick up from tourist offices and hotels, should be sufficient to help you find your way around. For something more durable, the best maps are by Freytag & Berndt (ⓦwww.freytagundberndt.at) and their rivals Kompass (ⓦwww.kompass.at), who both produce a whole variety of maps from city plans, with bus and tram routes, to road atlases at 1:150,000. The best general maps for walking and cycling are the 1:50,000 series, which are published in single sheets for all the popular areas. For hiking in the mountain, however, the ones to go for are the 1:25,000 Alpenvereinskarte series, produced by the Austrian Alpine Association (ⓦwww.alpenverein.at).

Mail

A **post office** is identified by a yellow sign saying Postamt; they have regular opening hours (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–6pm), with the main ones eschewing their lunch break and also opening on Saturdays, 8am to 10am.

Air mail (*Flugpost*) between Austria and the UK usually takes three or four days, about five days to reach the US, and a week to ten days to Australia and New Zealand. Stamps (*Briefmarken*) for postcards within the EU are obtainable from tobacconists (*Tabak*), though for anything more complicated or further afield, you'll probably have to go to a post office, where they like to weigh everything.

Poste restante (*Postlagernd*) letters can be sent to any post office, if you know the address. At the post office go to the counter marked *Postlagernde Sendungen*. Mail should be addressed using this term rather than "poste restante"; it will be held for thirty days (remember to take your passport when going to collect it).

Money

Austria's **currency** is the **euro** (€). The euro is split into 100 cents. There are seven euro **notes** – in denominations of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5 euros, each a different colour and size – and eight different **coin** denominations, including 2 and 1 euros, then 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents. Euro coins feature a common EU design on one face, but different country-specific designs on the other. No matter what the design, all euro coins and notes can be used in the following EU states: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and the Netherlands.

There are **ATMs** in most towns and cities, from which you should be able to take out cash using either a debit or credit card. Banks tend to give the best rates and charge

the lowest commission when it comes to **changing money** and **traveller's cheques**; most are open Monday to Friday 8am to 12.30pm and 1.30 to 3pm, with late closing on Thursdays at 5.30pm.

Opening hours

Shops are allowed to open Monday to Friday 6am to 7.30pm, Saturday 6am to 6pm, with late shopping usually on Thursdays. Some still close at lunchtimes and on Saturday afternoons, and all are shut on Sundays. The only exceptions to this rule, apart from pharmacists and a few bakeries, are the shops in the main train stations and the airport, which are open late and at weekends. Those in search of cigarettes after hours will find cigarette machines outside most state-run tobacconists (*Tabak*). **Cafés**, **bars** and **restaurants** tend to be open for much longer. *Kaffehäuser* in particular often open as early as 7am and continue until or after 11pm, and the trendier cafés stay open until 2am and later. Formal restaurants tend to open at lunch and dinner, but close in between. Most places where you can drink and eat have a weekly closing day or *Ruhetag*.

Phones

Austrian **phone booths** are easy enough to spot and to use, with instructions in four languages (including English). The dialling tone is a short pulse followed by a long one; the ringing tone is long and regular; engaged is short and rapid. At the time of going to press the minimum charge is 20 cents, but you're likely to need much more to make even a **local call**, since telephone calls are still quite expensive despite the recent deregulation.

One further peculiarity with Austrian **telephone numbers** is many numbers include a hyphen. It's not always necessary to dial the numbers after the hyphen, especially if it's a zero, which simply signals the system has **direct dial extension numbers** (*Durchwahlen*). If you know the extension you want, or it's given as part of the number, then you may dial it immediately after the main number.

You can make an **international call** from any phone, though it's easier to do so with a **phone card** (*Telefonkarte*) rather than from a coin-operated phone. Best value are **prepaid phone cards**, which will give you much longer call time and can be used from any public or private phone. Simply call the toll-free access number and then punch in the PIN given on the card.

If you're taking your **mobile/cell phone** (known as a *Handy* in German) with you, check with your service provider whether your phone will work abroad and what the call charges will be. Mobiles bought for use in Europe, Australia and New Zealand should work fine, though a mobile bought for use in the US is unlikely to work unless it's a tri-band phone.

Public holidays

On the **national public holidays** listed below, banks and shops will be closed all day. Museums and galleries will, somewhat confusingly, either be closed or open for free. Note, too, that all the country's museums are free on May 17 (International Museum Day) and October 26 (National Day).

Useful telephone numbers

Phoning Austria from abroad

From Australia and New Zealand ☎0011 + 43 + 1

From Britain and Ireland ☎00 + 43 + 1

From North America ☎011 + 43 + 1

Phoning abroad from Austria

Note that the initial zero is omitted from the area code when dialling the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand from abroad.

Australia ☎00 + 61 + city code

New Zealand ☎00 + 64 + city code

Republic of Ireland ☎00 + 353 + city code

UK ☎00 + 44 + city code

US and Canada ☎00 + 1 + area code

Information

Directory enquiries & operator ☎11 88 77

You can also view the **Austrian telephone directory** and *Yellow Pages* online at ⓦwww.herold.at

January 1 (Neues Jahr)
January 6 (Epiphany/Dreikönigsfest)
Easter Monday (Ostermontag)
May 1 (Labour Day/Tag des Arbeit)
Ascension Day (6th Thurs after Easter/Christi Himmelfahrt)
Whit Monday (6th Mon after Easter/Pfingstmontag)
Corpus Christi (2nd Thurs after Whitsuntide/Fronleichnam)
August 15 (Assumption Day/Maria Himmelfahrt)
October 26 (National Day/Nationalfeiertag)
November 1 (All Saints' Day/Allerheiligen)
December 8 (Immaculate Conception/Maria Empfängnis)
December 25 (Weihnachtstag)
December 26 (Zweite Weihnachtsfeiertag)

Smoking

So far the Austrians have resisted a total ban on **smoking** in public places, so you'll find smoking still permissible in cafés, restaurants and bars. However, the sale of cigarettes is strictly controlled; you must buy them during normal shop opening hours from a tobacconist (*Tabak*), or, outside shopping hours, from the vending machine outside the *Tabak*.

Swimming

Most Austrian towns of any size will have somewhere where you can **swim** (*Schwimmbad*). A *Freibad* is an open-air pool; a *Hallenbad*, an indoor pool; and an *Erlebnis-Hallenbad*, an adventure pool, which will probably feature water slides, whirlpool effects and so on. Spa resorts will have public swimming pools filled with mineral-rich waters from the local thermal springs. Entrance fees are rarely steep, ranging from about €5 for a small-town *Freibad* to about €7 for a big-city *Erlebnis-Hallenbad*.

Time

Austria is normally one hour ahead of the UK and Ireland, six hours ahead of EST and nine hours ahead of PST, with the clocks going forward in spring and back again some time in autumn – the exact date changes from year to year.

Tipping

Tipping is expected in the more upmarket hotels, taxis and in most cafés, bars and restaurants, usually up to the nearest euro depending on how much you've spent and how good the service was. In more expensive restaurants, you'll find the bill arrives with a fifteen-percent service charge already tacked on to the total.

Toilets

As a general rule, free (and invariably spotless) **public toilets** (*Toiletten* or *WC*) are found in all town centres in Austria, and are usually located somewhere near the main square. However, they tend to close relatively early in the evenings, in which case head for the nearest train station.

Tourist information

Most towns of any size have a **tourist office**, although they come under an assortment of names: *Information*, *Tourismusverband*, *Verkehrsamt* and *Fremdenverkehrsverein* are just some of the titles you'll come across. All are helpful and well organized, and staff usually speak English. They can supply brochures covering local attractions and activities, and free maps are often available. Some sell transport tickets and parking permits, and the majority book accommodation for personal callers, for a small fee, a deposit, or both.

Opening hours can be long, as late as 9pm in the larger cities during the summer and in alpine resorts during winter; outside this period, and in smaller towns and less touristy areas, times are likely to be more limited, often including a long lunch break (typically Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5pm). Outside the advertised opening hours, many leave a stock of leaflets and maps in a rack, or have touch-screen computer information points in a lobby.

Websites

Austria – general information Ⓦwww.tiscover.com. Tourist site for booking accommodation, including self-catering and campsites, flights and car rental online. Updated regularly so it can tell you what's happening in the next few weeks/months in Vienna.

Austrian Encyclopaedia Ⓦwww.aeiou.at. Website based on the Austrian Encyclopaedia, so should give the answer to any

Austrian query you have. You can navigate in English, though occasionally source material is in German only. Exhaustive links.

Austrian Search Engine ⓦwww.austrosearch.at. The best Austrian-specific English/German search engine on the net. Not only can you get three-day weather forecasts and up-to-date Austrian news, you can join chat groups, and find links for all sorts of Austro-nonsense.

Ex-pat Vienna ⓦwww.virtualvienna.net. Generally quite fun (largely US) expat website packed full of news, features, culture and listings.

Vienna Tourist Board ⓦwww.wien.info. The official Vienna tourist board's English/German website, with information on everything from secondhand bookshops to late-night eating options and art exhibitions. You can also book hotel accommodation online.

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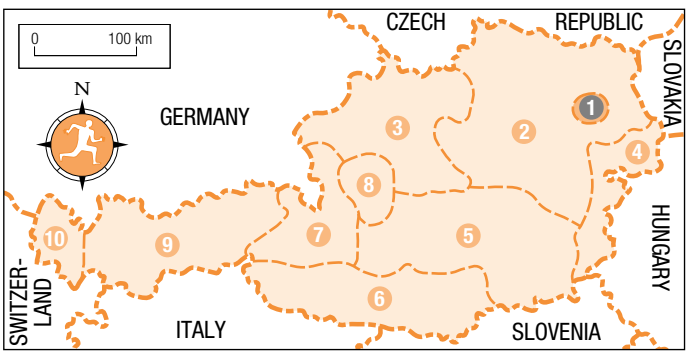
Vienna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CHAPTER 1 Highlights

- **Schatzkammer** The Habsburgs left behind an awesome array of crown jewels stretching back more than one thousand years. See p.91
- **Kunsthistorisches Museum** The country's most impressive museum building with a superlative collection of art and antiquities. See p.101
- **MuseumsQuartier** Vienna's newest cultural complex contains lots of modern art, including the world's largest collection of works by Schiele, and some great cafés. See p.103
- **Belvedere** Two very fine Baroque palaces separated by a formal garden and a superb collection of works by Klimt, Schiele and Kokoschka. See p.113
- **Schönbrunn** The imperial family's summer residence features lashings of Baroque excess, and a beautiful park complete with mazes, glasshouses and the world's oldest zoo. See p.121
- **Zentralfriedhof** A vast necropolis with a (dead) population of two and a half million, including Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Strauss and Schönberg. See p.131
- **Kaffeehaus** No visit to Vienna would be complete without sampling the relaxing pace of life in a real Viennese Kaffeehaus. See p.133

▲ Kunsthistorisches Museum

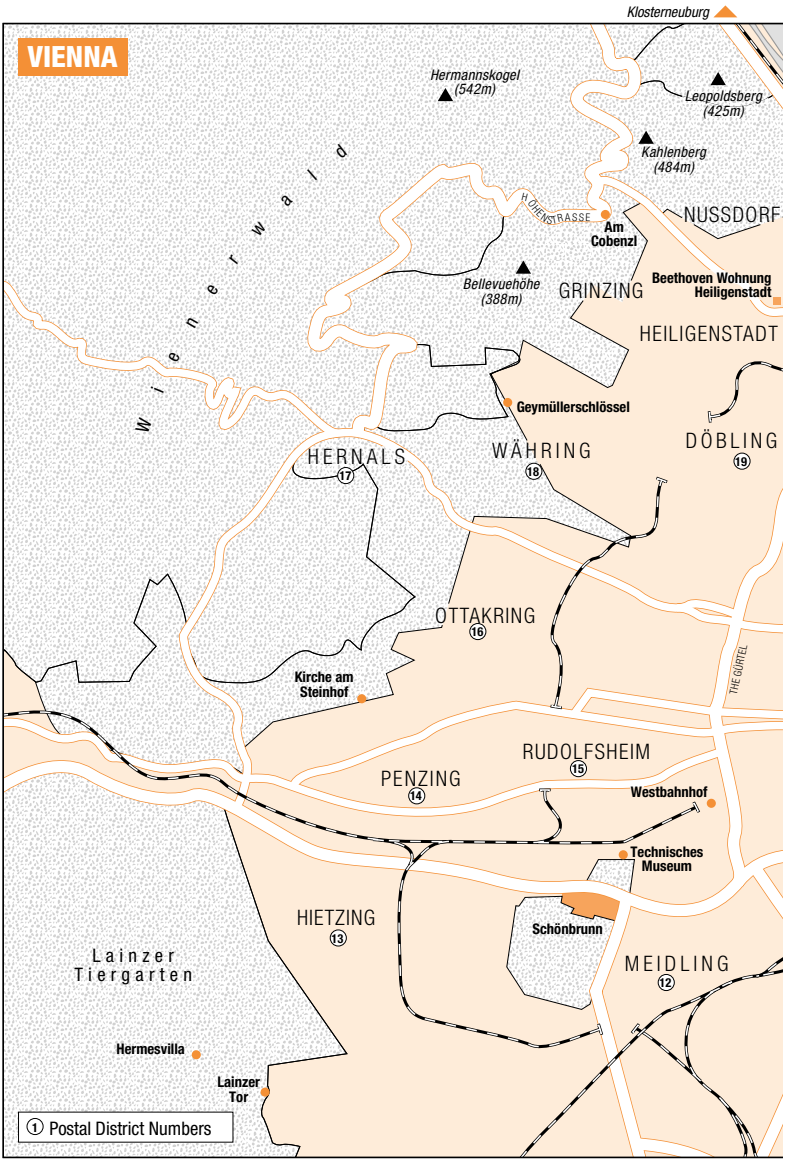
1 Vienna

Most people visit **Vienna** with a vivid image of the city in their minds: a monumental vision of Habsburg palaces, trotting white horses, old ladies in fur coats and mountains of fat cream cakes. And they're unlikely to be disappointed, for the city positively feeds off imperial nostalgia – High Baroque churches and aristocratic mansions pepper the central Innere Stadt, monumental projects from the late nineteenth century line the Ringstrasse, and postcards of the emperor Franz-Josef and his beautiful wife Elisabeth still sell by the sackful. Just as compelling as the old Habsburg standbys are the wonderful Jugendstil and early Modernist buildings, products of the era of Freud, Klimt, Schiele, Mahler and Schönberg, when the city's famous coffeehouses were filled with intellectuals from every corner of the empire. Without doubt, this was Vienna's golden age, after which all has been decline: with the end of the empire in 1918, the city was reduced from a metropolis of over two million and capital of a vast empire of fifty million, to a city of barely 1.5 million and federal capital of a small country of just eight million souls.

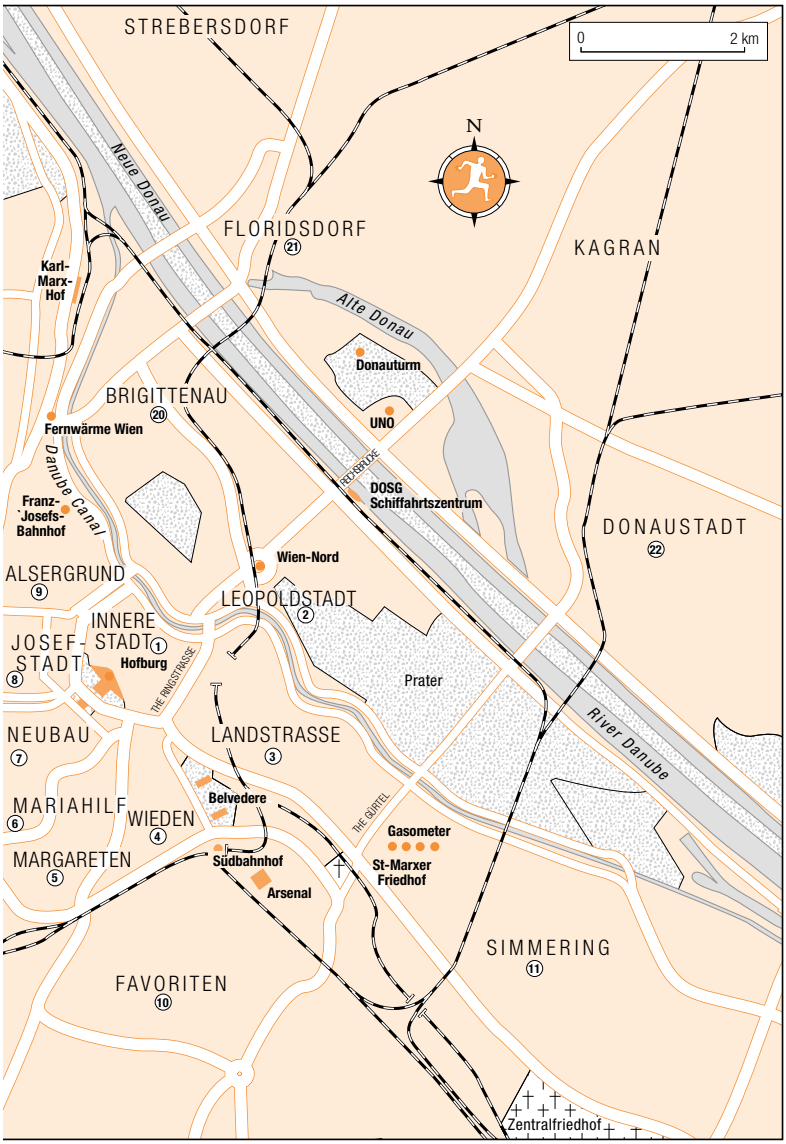
Given the city's twentieth-century history, it's hardly surprising that the Viennese are as keen as anyone to continue plugging the good old days. The visual scars from this turbulent history are comparatively light – even Hitler's sinister wartime *Flaktürme* (anti-aircraft towers) are confined to the suburbs – though the destruction of the city's enormous Jewish community, the driving force behind the city's fin-de-siècle culture, is a wound that has proved harder to heal. The city has struggled since to live up to the glorious achievements of its past, and has failed to shake off a reputation for xenophobia. Yet for all its problems, Vienna is still an inspiring city to visit, with one of the world's greatest art collections in the **Kunsthistorisches Museum**, world-class orchestras and a superb architectual heritage. It's also an eminently civilized place, clean, safe (for the most part) and served by a superb transport system. Despite its ageing population, it's also a city with a lively nightlife, and even Vienna's restaurants, long famous for quantity over quality, have discovered more innovative ways of cooking.

Most first-time visitors spend the majority of their time in Vienna's central district, the **Innere Stadt**, which retains much of its labyrinthine street layout. The chief sight here is the **Stephansdom**, Vienna's finest Gothic edifice, standing at the district's pedestrianized centre. Tucked into the southwest corner of the Innere Stadt is the **Hofburg**, the former imperial palace and seat of the Habsburgs, now housing a whole host of museums, the best of which is the Schatzkammer, home to the crown jewels.

The old fortifications enclosing the Innere Stadt were torn down in 1857, and over the next three decades gradually replaced by a showpiece boulevard called



the **Ringstrasse**. Nowadays, the Ringstrasse is used and abused by cars and buses as a ring road, though it's still punctuated with the most grandiose public buildings of late-imperial Vienna, one of which is home to the city's chief cultural complex, the **MuseumsQuartier**, and another of which houses the famous Kunsthistorisches Museum. Beyond the Ringstrasse lie Vienna's seven **Vorstädte**, or inner suburbs, whose outer boundary is marked by the traffic-clogged *Gürtel* (literally "belt"), or ring road. The highlight out here is the



Belvedere, where you can see a wealth of paintings by Austria's pre-eminent trio of modern artists – Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka – followed by the **Prater**, east of the Danube Canal, with its famous Ferris wheel and funfair. On the whole, there's little reason to venture beyond the *Gürtel* into the *Vororte*, or outer suburbs, except to visit **Schönbrunn**, the Habsburgs' former summer residence, a masterpiece of Rococo excess and an absolute must if only for the wonderful gardens.

Some history

Vienna's history as showpiece imperial capital is a comparatively brief one. From having been a not very important Roman fort called **Vindobona** on the military border of the River Danube, Vienna had to wait until the rise of the Babenberg dynasty before it became a capital of any sort. When the Babenberg male line came to an end in 1246, a long-running dispute broke out over who should rule over the region. In the end, it was a little-known count, **Rudolf of Habsburg**, who proved victorious, much to the annoyance of the Viennese, who had backed the loser, King Otakar II of Bohemia. Although the Habsburgs were to rule over the city for the next 640 years, Vienna only sporadically served as the dynastic capital. **Rudolf IV** (1356–65) was one of the few to treat it as such, and was given the nickname "The Founder" after he established the city's university and laid the foundation stone of the future cathedral.

The main stumbling block to Vienna's development was the threat posed by the Turks, who besieged the city twice. Although it's the later siege of 1683 that has captured the imagination of historians, the **1529 Turkish siege** was a much closer-run thing. The Ottoman empire was at the zenith of its power, and Vienna was defended by only a small garrison. Having shelled the city and killed some 1500 of its citizens, the Turks suddenly withdrew – quite why, no one knows. During the **1683 siege**, the city garrison of 10,000 men faced an Ottoman army of over 200,000. That the city was saved was no thanks to its emperor, Leopold I (1658–1701), who fled for the safety of Upper Austria. This time the Turks' defeat was assured by a combination of the sultan's greed – he tried to force the city to surrender by besieging it for over two months, rather than storming it and sharing the booty with his soldiers – and the arrival of a relief force under Polish King Jan Sobieski.

It was only after the Turks had been beaten back from the gates of Vienna a second time that the city finally established itself as the Habsburgs' permanent *Residenzstadt,* or *Kaiserstadt*. Over the next hundred years, an outpouring of **Baroque art and architecture** transformed the city, which could now safely spread out beyond the walls of the Innere Stadt. During the Napoleonic era, Vienna was besieged twice more in short succession by the French – in 1805, and again in 1809. This time the city surrendered on both occasions, and had to suffer the ignominy of occupation by French troops. In 1815, the city regained some of its pride as the setting for the great **Congress of Vienna**, at which the new post-Napoleonic balance of power was thrashed out, amidst a great deal of dancing and feasting.

In March 1848, **revolution** broke out on the streets of the capital, and wasn't extinguished until imperial troops brutally suppressed the uprising in October. The upshot of it all was the accession of the 18-year-old **emperor Franz-Josef I** (1848–1916), whose immensely long reign encompassed the city's golden age. The city's population swelled to over two million, some ten percent of whom were Jewish immigrants, giving Vienna the largest Jewish community in the German-speaking world. At the same time, anti-Semitism as a viable modern political force was invented, sounding the death knell for the city's remaining Jews.

For a decade after the war, Vienna, like Berlin, was under **Allied occupation**, divided into French, American, British and Soviet sectors. Since the withdrawal of the four Allied powers in 1955, however, Vienna has lived a fairly peaceful existence, best known as one of the three cities that serve as **UN headquarters** and as host to international conferences.

Arrival, information and city transport

For all its grandiosity, Vienna is surprisingly compact: the centre is just a kilometre across at its broadest point, and you can travel from one side of the city to the other by public transport in less than thirty minutes. Although the **Danube** is crucial to Vienna's identity, most visitors see very little of the river, whose canalized main arm flows through the outer suburbs to the northeast of the centre. Only the river's diminutive westernmost arm, known as the Danube Canal (Donaukanal), flows anywhere near the centre.

Arrival

The city's **international airport**, Flughafen Wien-Schwechat (Ⓣ7007, Ⓦwww.viennaairport.com), lies around 20km southeast of the city. It's connected to the centre by the City Airport Train or **CAT** (daily 5.30am–11.30pm; Ⓦwww.cityairporttrain.com); tickets cost €8 one way and trains leave every thirty minutes, taking sixteen minutes to reach the City Air Terminal at Wien-Mitte (U-Bahn Landstrasse/Wien Mitte). Alternatively, you can catch **S-Bahn** line S7 (daily 4.30am–10pm); trains leave every thirty minutes, taking thirty minutes to reach Wien-Mitte and terminating at Wien-Nord. This is the cheapest way of getting into town, costing just €3 for a single ticket, or €1.50 plus the price of a travel pass for the central zone (see p.66), which you can buy at the same time. **Buses** from the airport to Schwedenplatz are even more frequent, leaving every twenty minutes from 6.20am until just after midnight; they take around twenty minutes to reach the city centre, and tickets cost €6. There are also buses every thirty minutes to the Südbahnhof and Westbahnhof (see below). If you're taking a **taxi** to the centre, opt for an airport taxi rather than a standard one – C&K Airport Service (Ⓣ444 44), for example, charge around €28 one way.

Arriving in Vienna by train from the west, you'll end up at the **Westbahnhof**, five U-Bahn stops west of Stephansplatz in the city centre on the U3 line. Trains from the east, Italy and the Balkans terminate at the **Südbahnhof**, to the south of the city centre; you can either walk five minutes west to U-Bahn Südtiroler Platz, or hop on tram D, which will take you to the Ringstrasse. Of Vienna's other stations, **Franz-Josefs-Bahnhof**, in the northern suburb of Alsergrund, serves as an arrival point for services from Lower Austria and the odd train from Prague (take tram D into town), while **Wien-Nord** (U-Bahn Praterstern), in Leopoldstadt, is used exclusively by local and regional trains, including the S-Bahn to the airport (see above).

Since Vienna has no main **bus station**, your arrival point will depend on which company you're travelling with. Eurolines long-distance buses currently arrive at Erdberg U-Bahn, on the southeastern edge of the city centre. In the unlikely event of your arriving on one of the **DDSG boat services** (Ⓦwww.ddsg-blue-danube.at) from Bratislava, you disembark near the city centre by Schwedenplatz. From further up the Danube, or from Budapest, you'll find yourself disembarking at the Schiffahrtszentrum by the Reichsbrücke, some way northeast of the city centre; the nearest station (U-Bahn Vorgartenstrasse) is five minutes' walk away, one block west of Mexikoplatz.

Information

The main **tourist office** of the Vienna Tourist Board or *Wien Tourismus* is behind the opera house on Albertinaplatz at the corner of Maysedergasse (daily 9am–7pm; Ⓣ24555, Ⓦwww.vienna.info). The staff will happily hand out a free

The **telephone code** for Vienna is ⓣ0222 from the rest of Austria and ⓣ01 from outside the country.

map of the city, with all the bus routes, tram lines and metro stations marked on, plus all the opening times of the various museums and galleries. It's also worth asking for the tourist board's monthly *Programm* for opera, concert and theatre schedules, upcoming exhibitions, and the monthly goings-on at the state museums. Those under 26 might prefer to try the youth-oriented tourist office, *WienXtra*, at 1, Babenbergerstr 1 (Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Ⓦwww.wienxtra.at), near the Kunsthistorisches Museum. There are also **information desks** at the airport (daily 8.30am–9pm) and at the Westbahnhof (daily 7am–10pm).

For the most comprehensive and critical **listings**, you need the weekly tabloid *Falter* (Ⓦwww.falter.at), which comes out on Wednesdays. Even if your German isn't great, you should be able to decipher the pull-out *Wienprogramm & Lexicon* section, which contains the week's listings. Most of the headings are self-explanatory, but it's just as well to know that Musik-E covers classical music, while Musik-U is for pop, jazz and folk.

City transport

Vienna's city centre is best explored on foot, but for covering larger distances, you'll need to use the extremely efficient **city transport** system, known as the *Wiener Linien* (Ⓦwww.wienerlinien.at). Predictably enough, the trams and buses are punctual and the rapidly expanding U-Bahn (metro) is clean, quick and reasonably priced.

Tickets

A single-journey **ticket** (*Fahrschein*), standard for all forms of public transport, costs €1.70 from machines and ticket booths (*Vorverkauf)* at major tram junctions and U-Bahn stations, and also from tobacconists (*Tabak-Trafik*). When you enter the U-Bahn, or board a tram or bus, you must punch (*entwerten*) your ticket in one of the blue machines. You can then make one journey, during which you can change buses, trams or U-Bahn lines as many times as you like, as long as you proceed in a logical direction without any "breaks".

If you're planning on making more than two journeys a day, you should invest in a **travel pass**, or *Netzkarte*, which allows travel on all trams, buses, U- and S-Bahn trains within the city. You can buy a 24-hour ticket (€5.70) or a 72-hour ticket (€13.60) from machines and booths at all U-Bahn stations; when buying your ticket from a machine, select the central zone, or *Kernzone* (*Zone 100*), which covers the whole of Vienna. You must punch your single *Netzkarte* at the beginning of your first journey – your 24 or 72 hours start from then.

The much-touted **Wien-Karte** or Vienna Card (€18.50) gives discounts at tourist sights of between ten and twenty percent (occasionally more), as well as being a 72-hour *Netzkarte*. If you're in Vienna for a long weekend and intend to do quite a bit of sightseeing, then the ticket will pay for itself.

Even more useful is the **8-day ticket**, or *8-Tage-Karte* (€27.20), which is valid for eight (not necessarily consecutive) days' unlimited travel, calculated in 24-hour blocks from the hour of punching. It can be used by one or more people – one person for eight days, two people for four, and so on – simply punch one strip on the card for each person in the group. To do this you must fold the card over before inserting it in the blue machines, starting with strip 1.

Guided tours, boat trips and walks

Vienna Sightseeing Tours (Ⓦwww.viennasightseeingtours.com) run a variety of **bus tours** around the city and surrounding districts. The standard city tour (daily: April–Oct 9.45am, 10.45am & 2.45pm; Nov–March 9.45am & 2pm; €35) takes around three and a half hours, though only the summer 10.30am tour and winter 2pm tours have English commentary. They also run a **hop-on hop-off bus** hourly (daily 9.30am–4.30pm), with running commentary in English and German; tickets cost €20 for a day ticket.

Alternatively, you can save yourself the commentary by hopping on **tram** #1 or #2, which circumnavigate the Ringstrasse clockwise and anticlockwise respectively. You can also take an hour-long ride on a 1920s tram known as the **Oldtimer-Tramway** (May–Sept Sat 11.30am & 1.30pm, Sun 9.30am, 11.30am & 1.30pm; €15). Trams leave from beside the Otto Wagner pavilions on Karlsplatz; tickets are available from Karlsplatz U-Bahn.

Most appealing are the **walking tours** organized by Vienna's official tourist guides – you'll find details, such as whether the tours are in German or English, in the monthly *Wiener Spaziergänge* leaflet from the tourist office (Ⓦwww.wienguide.at). These cover a relatively small area in much greater detail, mixing historical facts with juicy anecdotes in the company of a local specialist. Subjects covered range from Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) architecture to Jewish Vienna, and the twice-weekly Third Man tour (see p.111). With the exception of the latter, tours cost around €12 and last between one and a half and two hours. Simply turn up at the meeting point specified.

The main company running **boat trips** on the Danube is the DDSG (Ⓦwww.ddsg-blue-danube.at). Its **Grosse Donaurundfahrt** (April–Sept 2–5 daily) departs from the Danube Canal beside Schwedenplatz, goes through a lock and calls at the Reichsbrücke on the Danube itself, so you can embark and disembark at either stop. A one-way ticket between the two points costs €16, a return costs €18. Vienna doesn't look at its best from the canal or the river, but you will get to see Hundertwasser's Fernwärme or paper incinerator, Otto Wagner's weir and lock at Nussdorf, the Millenniumstower, and, on the way back, the Prater and the Buddhist temple. There's even a Hundertwasser-designed boat, *MS Vinobona*, which sets off for a round-trip cruise (Fri–Sun 2 daily; €12) from the Reichsbrücke (U-Bahn Vorgartenstrasse).

If you're staying in Vienna longer than three days, it might be worth buying a **weekly card**, or *Wochenkarte* (€14), available only from the ticket offices at U-Bahn stations. The pass runs from 9am Monday to Monday, so there's no need to punch the ticket.

The Viennese being a law-abiding bunch, there are few **ticket inspectors**, but if you are caught without a valid ticket or pass, you'll be handed an on-the-spot fine of €70 (on top of the appropriate fare).

U- and S-Bahn

Vienna's **U-Bahn**, currently boasting five lines (U1–4 and U6), is by far the fastest way of getting around the city. Not all U-Bahn lines are underground: the U4 and U6 lines run partly on the old overground Stadtbahn created in the 1890s, and both lines retain some of their original stations and bridges designed by Otto Wagner. Each line is colour-coded (U1 is purple, U2 red and so on); to figure out which platform you want, look out for the name of the end station in the direction you wish to travel.

The **S-Bahn**, or *Schnellbahn*, is of most use to Viennese commuters, though it's also the cheapest way of getting to and from the airport (see p.65) and is useful for day-trips to places in Lower Austria (see p.151). S-Bahn trains are less frequent than U-Bahn trains – running every fifteen to thirty minutes compared with roughly every five minutes – and are strictly timetabled.

Trams, buses and taxis

Vienna has one of the world's largest networks of **trams** (*Strassenbahn*) with more than thirty routes crisscrossing the capital. After the U-Bahn, trams are the fastest and most efficient way of getting around, running every five to ten minutes. They're fairly punctual, though some lines don't run at weekends or late at night so be sure to check the timetables posted at every stop (*Haltestelle*).

Buses (*Autobusse*) mostly ply the narrow backstreets and outer suburbs and are equally punctual. In the heart of the Innere Stadt, there are several very useful bus services: #1A, which winds its way from Schottentor to Stubentor; #2A from Schwedenplatz through the Hofburg to Burgring; and #3A from Schottenring to Schwarzenbergplatz. NightLine **night buses** run every thirty minutes from 12.30am to 5am; all 22 routes pass through Schwedenplatz at some point, tickets are the same as for all other forms of transport and travel passes are valid.

Taxis are plentiful and fairly reliable too, with the minimum charge around €2, plus €1 if you've gone to a taxi rank and €2 if you've called one up by phone, followed by an extra €1 or so per kilometre or couple of minutes. You can't flag down a taxi, but you can catch a cab at one of the taxi ranks around town, or phone Ⓣ31300, 40100 or 60160. You can, however, hail a bicycle taxi, known as a **faxi** (Ⓣ0699/120 05 624, Ⓦwww.faxi,at), which costs €2.50 per kilometre.

Cycling, cars and Fiaker

Despite the fact that **cycling** isn't very popular in Vienna, the city has introduced a system of **free bike rental** called Citybike (Ⓦwww.citybikewien.at).

Equipped with a credit card, you can pick up (or drop off) one of the bikes (*Fahrräder*) from fifty different street locations across the city. The bikes are free for the first hour, €1 for the second hour, another €2 for the third and so on. Note that the bike stations are closed in the winter when the weather's bad.

Cars are really not necessary for getting around Vienna. If, however, you arrive in Vienna by car and need to park, it's as well to know the **parking restrictions** in the blue zones (*Blauzonen*), also called short-term parking zones (*Kurzparkzonen*). In general, the maximum length of stay in the first district (Altstadt or Innere Stadt) is one and a half hours (Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat as indicated on sign); in the second to ninth districts, and in the twentieth district, you can park for up to two hours (Mon–Fri 9am–8pm, Sat as indicated on sign). At the weekend it's a free-for-all. However, check the signs before parking, as exact restrictions do vary. If there's no pay-and-display machine, you'll need to buy a 30-, 60- or 90-minute parking voucher (*Parkscheine*) from a tobacconist or post office, and fill it in before displaying it.

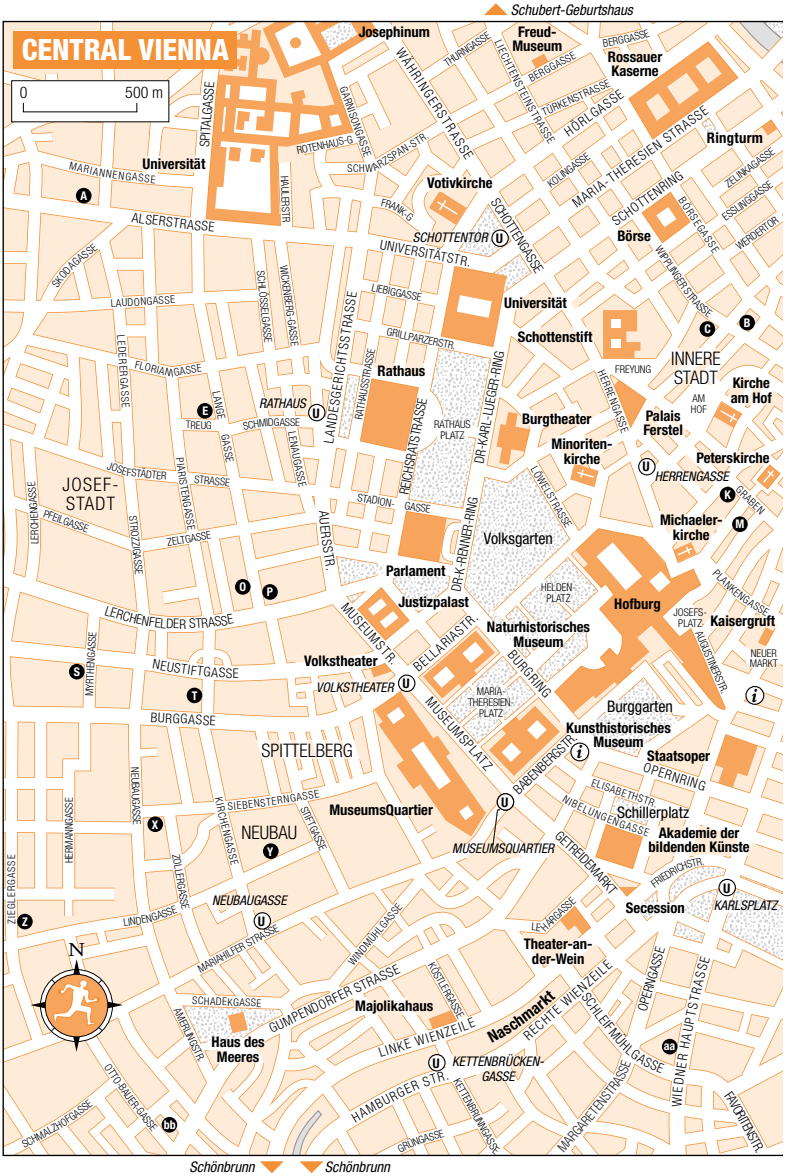
An expensive Viennese indulgence is a ride in a soft-top horse-drawn carriage or **Fiaker**, driven by bowler-hatted, multilingual coachmen who will happily give you a guided tour; there are Fiaker ranks at Stephansplatz, Heldenplatz, Michaelerplatz and Albertinaplatz. It's best to settle on the price and duration of your ride beforehand; the going rate is €50 for twenty minutes, or €70 for forty minutes, but it's worth haggling.

Accommodation

As you might expect, Vienna has some of the most opulent, historic **hotels** in Europe, with mesospheric prices to match. However, reasonably priced central accommodation can be found, especially in the numerous **pensions**. These are not necessarily inferior in quality to hotels – in fact some are a whole lot better. Vienna also has plenty of space in official HI and independent **hostels**, although these can be booked up months in advance so reserve ahead. From July to September, you can stay in a room in one of the city's **student halls**, known as Saisonhotels (seasonal hotels) and booked directly or through the tourist office (see p.65). Inveterate **campers** have a wide choice of peripheral sites. If you arrive without a booking, any of the tourist offices can make a reservation for you, for which they charge a small fee. Our recommendations are divided by district, and listed alphabetically.

Vienna's postal districts and addresses

Vienna is divided into 23 *Bezirke*, or **postal districts**, which spiral out from the first district (the Innere Stadt), in a clockwise direction, with only the odd geographical hiccup. When writing **addresses**, the Viennese write the number of the district first, followed by the name of the street, and then the house number; most residential addresses also include an apartment number, separated from the house number by a slash. For example: 9, Löblichgasse 11/14, denotes apartment no. 14 at no. 11 Löblichgasse in the ninth district. Many addresses use the four-digit postcode, the middle two numbers of which correspond to the district, eg. A-1010 is the first district; A-1120 is the twelfth district.



Hotels and pensions

Hotels and pensions in Vienna as a rule adhere to the standards of efficiency, modernity and cleanliness you'd expect in Austria. It's perfectly possible to stay right in the Innere Stadt without breaking the bank, although the cheapest places tend to be in the districts beyond the Ringstrasse, where, especially in the seventh (Neubau) and eighth (Josefstadt) districts, there's an even wider

ACCOMMODATION

Altstadt Vienna	T	bb
Am Stephansplatz	L	X
Anna	Z	C
Astra	A	Y
Austria	H	U
Aviano	R	Q
Bosch	cc	K
City	G	B
Das Triest	aa	M
Dr Geissler	D	I
Etap Hotel Wien St Marx	W	O
Hollmann Beletage	F	J
Jugendherbergen (Youth hostel)	S	V
König von Ungarn	N	P
Kraml		E
Kugel		
Lerner		
Lindenhof		
Mailbergerhof		
Neuer Markt		
Nossek		
Orient		
Pertschy		
Post		
Rathaus		
Sacher Apartments		
Suzanne		
Wild		
Zipser		

choice of restaurants and bars than the central tourist zone. **Breakfast** is included in the price at most hotels and pensions, though what it comprises can differ enormously.

The Innere Stadt

Hotel am Stephansplatz 1, Stephansplatz 9 Ⓣ 534 05-0, Ⓦ www.hotelamstephansplatz.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. The decor is pretty dated, but the rooms are perfectly comfortable and spacious, and it's just about as central as you can

get, without actually being inside the Stephansdom. 9

Hotel Austria 1, Fleischmarkt 20 Ⓣ515 23, Ⓦwww.hotelaustria-wien.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Plush family-run hotel, pleasantly located in the quiet cul-de-sac of Wolfengasse, off Fleischmarkt, with some cheap rooms without en-suite facilities. 6

Pension City 1, Bauernmarkt 10 Ⓣ533 95 21, Ⓦwww.citypension.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. On the second floor of a wonderful late nineteenth-century building (birthplace of Franz Grillparzer) and run by a friendly woman proprietor. Tastefully decorated rooms all en suite. 5

Pension Dr Geissler 1, Postgasse 14 Ⓣ533 28 03, Ⓦwww.hotelpension.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Anonymous modern pension on the eighth floor; however, the singles and doubles are clean and the ones with shared facilities are among the cheapest in the Innere Stadt. 3

Hollmann Beletage 1, Kollnerhofgasse 6 Ⓣ961 19 60, Ⓦwww.hollmann-beletage.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz/Stephansplatz. Small boutique hotel whose bright and cheery rooms are replete with contemporary furnishings. Service is pretty low-key, and there's no reception at night; breakfasts are excellent. 8

Hotel König von Ungarn 1, Schulerstr 10 Ⓣ515 84-0, Ⓦwww.kvu.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Tastefully modernized hotel with a remarkable wooden-panelled, covered courtyard bar/lounge. Rooms are fair-sized, pleasantly decorated and equipped with a/c. Service is top notch and the location dead central. 9

Pension Lerner 1, Wipplingerstr 23 Ⓣ533 52 19, Ⓦwww.pensionlerner.com; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Small, super-central, seven-room pension with friendly staff, Wi-Fi and super breakfasts. They also have a few apartments to let in Schulerstrasse. 5

Hotel Mailbergerhof 1, Annagasse 7 Ⓣ512 06 41, Ⓦwww.mailbergerhof.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz/Stephansplatz. Converted Baroque palace on a delightfully discreet, narrow side street off Kärntnerstrasse, with attractively furnished rooms for around €200. The hotel is smart, but the ambience is relaxed, and the staff are supremely efficient and friendly. 9

Pension Neuer Markt 1, Seilergasse 9 Ⓣ512 23 16, Ⓦwww.hotelpension.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Very popular central pension on the second floor of a lovely old patrician building. Rooms are clean, comfortable and modern, those without shower or en-suite toilet are a relative bargain – only a few have views over Neuermarkt. 4

Pension Nossek 1, Graben 17 Ⓣ533 70 41, Ⓦwww.pension-nossek.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Old-fashioned, large family-run pension on three floors of an old building on the pedestrianized Graben, with en-suite doubles of varying sizes, and some real bargain singles with shared facilities. It's popular so book in advance. 7

Hotel Orient 1, Tiefer Graben 30 Ⓣ533 73 07, Ⓦwww.hotelorient.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Vienna's equivalent of a Tokyo "love hotel", with rooms rented by the hour and per night. Couples come for the mind-boggling exotic decor, and the wide range of themed rooms. 7

Pension Pertschy 1, Habsburgergasse 5 Ⓣ534 49-0, Ⓦwww.pertschy.com; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Flagship of the Pertschy pension chain, with rooms off a series of plant-strewn balconies looking onto a lovely old courtyard. The rooms have lots of character, high ceilings, tasteful furnishings and TV. 7

Hotel Post 1, Fleischmarkt 24 Ⓣ515 83, Ⓦwww.hotel-post-wien.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Civilized, central hotel with over a hundred mostly large, old rooms with modern furnishings. The ones without shower and toilet are the real bargain. 4

Sacher Apartments am Stephansplatz 1, Rotenturmstr1 Ⓣ533 32 38, Ⓦwww.pension-sacher.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Incredible location on the seventh floor on the corner of Stephansplatz itself. There are just nine rooms, with lovely parquet flooring and pleasant furnishings. All have TV, shower, toilet, fridge and cooking facilities, and most have views out on to the Stephansdom. No breakfast. 6

Pension Suzanne 1, Walfischgasse 4 Ⓣ513 25 07, Ⓦwww.pension-suzanne.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Family-run pension just off Kärntnerstrasse, furnished in tasteful period style; rooms are spacious, and many have baths, balconies and even small kitchens (though breakfast is included). 6

The Vorstädte

Altstadt Vienna 7, Kirchengasse 41 Ⓣ522 66 66, Ⓦwww.altstadt.at; U-Bahn Volkstheater. A cut above most other pensions, with laid-back, well-informed staff, a relaxing lounge and full-on buffet breakfast. Tastefully decorated en-suite rooms with high ceilings and a great location, near Spittelberg, and within easy walking distance of the U-Bahn and Ring. 8

Pension Anna 7, Zieglergasse 18 Ⓣ523 01 60, Ⓦwww.pension-anna.at; U-Bahn Zieglergasse. First-floor pension run by a friendly couple. The startling light-blue decor doesn't extend into the fourteen bedrooms, all of which have en-suite shower and toilet. Closed Christmas. 6

Pension Astra 8, Alserstrasse 32 Ⓣ402 43 54, Ⓦwww.hotelpensionastra.com; U-Bahn

Alserstrasse. Mid-sized pension on the mezzanine of an old patrician building. Friendly staff and a range of modernized rooms, from simple doubles without toilet to roomy apartments. 4

Pension Bosch 3, Keilgasse 13 ⓣ798 61 79, ⓦwww.hotelpensionbosch.com; S-Bahn Rennweg or tram #0, #18 or #71. Friendly pension in a quiet residential backstreet near the Südbahnhof, behind the Belvedere, an easy tram ride into town. The thirteen rooms have lots of character, and the cheapest ones have shared facilities. Closed Jan. 3

Das Triest 4, Wiedner Hauptstr 12 ⓣ589 18-0, ⓦwww.dastriest.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Designer hotel hidden away in a nondescript building a short stroll from Karlsplatz. The super-smooth, minimalist interior comes courtesy of Terence Conran and the Italians, and is quirky in an understated way. Rooms, which start at around €265, are immaculate, and those on the top floor have great views across the city skyline. 9

Etap Hotel Wien St Marx 3, Franzosengraben 15 ⓣ798 45 55, ⓦwww.etaphotel.com; U-Bahn Gasometer. Totally modern, clean, budget chain hotel in a far from attractive area, though it's only a short walk from the new Gasometer development. 3

Pension Kraml 6, Brauergasse 5 ⓣ587 85 88, ⓦwww.pensionkraml.at; U-Bahn Zieglergasse/Neubaugasse. Probably the friendliest and most reliable of the cheap pensions in the quiet streets off Mariahilferstrasse. Large, smart, clean, modern rooms, some with en-suite facilities. 3

Hotel Kugel 7, Siebensterngasse 43 ⓣ523 33 55, ⓦwww.hotelkugel.at; U-Bahn Neubaugasse. Long-established, family-run hotel within spitting distance of Spittelberg's numerous restaurants and bars. Bright, clean, en-suite rooms (some with modern four-posters), plus a few bargain singles with shared facilities. Closed Jan. 5

Pension Lindenhof 7, Lindengasse 4 ⓣ523 04 98, ⓔpensionlindenhof@yahoo.com; U-Bahn Neubaugasse. On the first floor of a lugubrious turn-of-the-century building at the Spittelberg end of this long street. Lovely, up-only lift, plant-strewn communal area and endearingly old-fashioned rooms (some of which are en suite), with high ceilings and creaky parquet flooring. 3

Hotel Rathaus 8, Lange Gasse 13 ⓣ400 11 22, ⓦwww.hotel-rathaus-wien.at; U-Bahn Rathaus. A discreet boutique hotel with bright, contemporary, wine-themed rooms in an old patrician building a few blocks west of the Rathaus. Breakfasts are superb and you can opt (later) for some wine-tasting too. 9

Pension Wild 8, Lange Gasse 10 ⓣ406 51 74, ⓦwww.pension-wild.com; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Friendly, laid-back pension, a short walk from the Ring in a student district behind the university, and especially popular with backpackers and gay travellers. Booking essential. 3

Hotel Zipser 8, Lange Gasse 49 ⓣ404 54-0, ⓦwww.zipser.at; U-Bahn Rathaus. Well-equipped, modern pension, offering a buffet breakfast – a reliable choice, just a short walk from the Ring behind the Rathaus. 5

Hostels, student halls and camping

Vienna's official **hostelling international** *Jugendherbergen* (youth hostels) are efficient, clean, and, occasionally, even friendly. However, with just one exception, they are all a long way from the centre. Most of the beds are in segregated dorms, but some do have bunk-bed doubles and many have en-suite facilities. Prices vary, but are usually around €15–20 a night including a simple continental breakfast. You should make an **advance reservation by email or phone** as soon as you know when you might be arriving, as places occasionally get booked out in advance; at the very least, you should ring before turning up on spec.

The biggest practical drawback to the official hostels is that they throw you out each day at the ungodly hour of 9am in order to clean, and won't let you back in until 3 or 4pm. The lure of the **independent hostel**, then, is that while the prices are much the same as the HI hostels, the atmosphere is a bit less institutional, there's no lockout or a more generous one allowing a longer lie-in.

Finally, given that Vienna's **campsites** are all quite far out from the centre, you might consider camping outside the city completely, somewhere like Klosterneuburg, which enjoys fast connections with Vienna. Pitches cost around €9, plus a fee of around €7 per person.

Hostels

Jugendgästehaus Wien-Brigittenau 20, Friedrich-Engels-Platz 24 ⓣ 332 82 94, ⓦ www.oejhv.or.at; tram N from U-Bahn Schwedenplatz or U-Bahn Handelskai. Huge, clean, modern HI hostel in a dour working-class suburb with dorms and en-suite bunk-bed doubles.

Kolpingfamilie Jugendgästehaus Wien-Meidling 12, Bendlgasse 10–12 ⓣ 813 54 87, ⓦ www.kolpinghaus-wien12.at; U-Bahn Niederhofstrasse. Modern HI hostel easily reached by U-Bahn from the centre, with single-sex and mixed dorms.

Jugendherbergen Wien-Myrthengasse 7, Myrthengasse 7 ⓣ 523 63 16, ⓦ www.oejhv.or.at; bus #48A or 10min walk from U-Bahn Volkstheater. The most central of all the HI hostels, with 200-plus dorm beds divided between two addresses round the corner from each other. Book well in advance.

Hostel Ruthensteiner 15, Robert-Hamerling-Gasse 24 ⓣ 893 42 02, ⓦ www.hostelruthensteiner.com; U-Bahn Westbahnhof. Excellent, quiet hostel with a nice courtyard to hang out in, within easy walking distance of the Westbahnhof, and with dorm beds, doubles and triples (discounts for HI members).

Schlossherberge am Wilhelminenberg 16, Savoyenstr 2 ⓣ 485 85 03-700, ⓦ www.hostel.at; bus #146B or #46B from U-Bahn Ottakring. Slightly pricier dorm beds or doubles in a beautiful location next to a Neoclassical mansion in the Vienna Woods, but not a great base from which to sample the nightlife.

Wombat's City Hostel 15, Grangasse 6 ⓣ 897 23 36, ⓦ www.wombats.at; U-Bahn Westbahnhof. Plain dorm beds and bunk-bed doubles, but a party atmosphere at this friendly, laid-back hostel, within easy walking distance of Westbahnhof. 24hr reception.

Campsites

Camping Rodaun 23, An der Au 2 ⓣ 888 41 54, ⓦ www.wiencamping.at; tram #60 from U-Bahn Hietzing to its terminus, then 5min walk. Nice location by a stream on the southwestern outskirts of Vienna, near the Wienerwald. Open mid-May to Oct.

Wien West 14, Hüttelbergstr 80 ⓣ 914 23 14, ⓦ www.wiencamping.at; bus #152 from U-Bahn Hütteldorf or a 15min walk from tram #49 terminus. In the plush, far western suburbs of Vienna, close to the Wienerwald; with two- and four-person bungalows to rent between April and Oct (€29/45). March–Dec.

The Innere Stadt

The **Innere Stadt** (Inner City), Vienna's first district, has been the very heart of the place since the Romans founded Vindobona here in 15 BC. It was here, too, that the Babenburg dukes built their powerbase in the twelfth century, and from 1533 the Habsburgs established the **Hofburg**, their imperial residence. In fact, the city occupied pretty much the same space until the zigzag fortifications, which had protected it on two occasions against the Turks, were finally taken down in the mid-nineteenth century.

The focus of the Innere Stadt is the magnificent cathedral, the **Stephansdom**, whose spire also acts as a useful landmark. Close by are the chief shopping streets of **Kärntnerstrasse**, **Graben** and **Kohlmarkt**, which get progressively more exclusive the nearer you get to the Hofburg. There's a steady ebb and flow of folk along these streets at most times of the day, but the cathedral and the **Kaisergruft**, the last resting place of the Habsburgs, just off Kärntnerstrasse, are the only sights that get heavily clogged up with tour groups. Head off into the rest of the Innere Stadt, with its medieval lanes, hidden courtyards and *Durchhäuser* (literally, "through-houses"), and you'll soon lose the crowds.

Stephansplatz and around

The geographical heart of the Innere Stadt is **Stephansplatz**, the lively, pedestrianized square that surrounds the hoary Gothic bulk of **Stephansdom**. As such, it's one of the best places for watching Vienna's streetlife, from the benign young slackers who lounge around on the benches by the U-Bahn, to the beleaguered

folk in eighteenth-century costumes, wearily flogging tickets for classical concerts. The other whiff of heritage is the smell of horse dung that wafts across the square from the *Fiaker* lined up along the north wall of the cathedral.

Apart from the cathedral, the most dominant feature of the square is the tinted glass and polished stone carbuncle of the **Haas Haus**, which, understandably, caused something of a furore when it was unveiled in 1990. The architect, Hans Hollein, also designed several equally uncompromising jewellery stores along Graben and Kohlmarkt, each of which is a minor masterpiece. Here, though, the effect is simply brash, and to cap it all, the interior is an unimaginative mini-shopping mall.

Stephansdom

The **Stephansdom** (Ⓦwww.stephanskirche.at), distinguished by the multi-coloured chevrons on its roof, dominates the Viennese skyline as it has done for centuries. An obvious military target, it has endured two Turkish sieges, Napoleonic bombardment and, in the later stages of World War II, the attentions of American bombers and Russian artillery. That it survived at all is a miracle, and has ensured it a special place in the hearts of the Viennese. The foundation stone of the current building was laid in 1359 by Rudolf IV, but it wasn't until the early twentieth century that the choir and several of the chapels were completed.

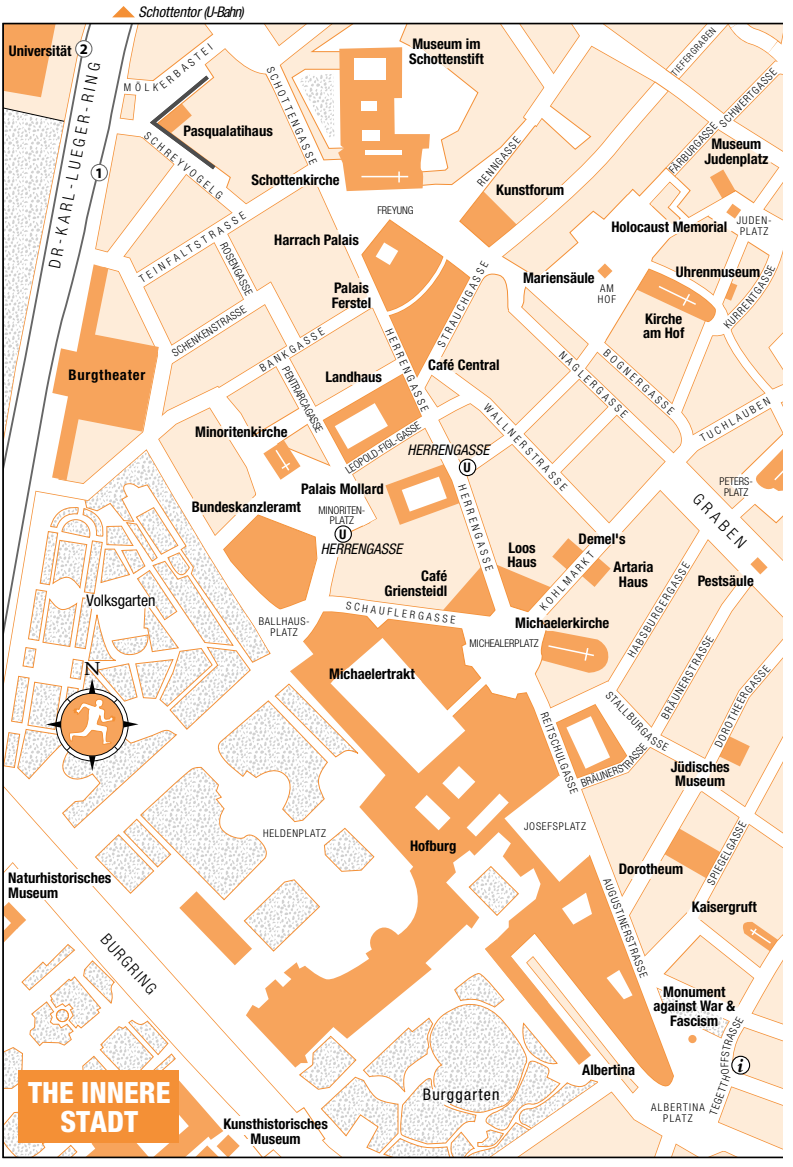
The cathedral's most magnificent **exterior** feature is the sublime south tower (Hochturm) – ironically nicknamed **Steffl** ("Little Stephen") by the locals – which soars to a height of 137m. The planned north tower, or Eagle Tower (Adlerturm), was to have been built along similar lines, but fell victim to cost-cutting during the build-up to the first Turkish siege of 1529, its half-built stump eventually receiving a copper cupola in 1556. You can take the lift up the north tower to see the cathedral's great bell known as the **Pummerin** or "Boomer" (daily: April–Oct 8.30am–5.30pm; July & Aug 8.30am–6pm; Nov–March 8.30am–5pm; €4), though the south tower or **Südturm** (daily 9am–5.30pm; €3), a scramble up 343 steps, has better views.

The interior

The first thing that strikes you as you enter the gloomy, high-vaulted interior of the cathedral is that, despite the tourists, Stephansdom is still very much a place of worship. At peak times, it can be difficult to get a seat in the area immediately to your right, facing the **Pötscher Madonna**, which sits below a delicate late-Gothic baldachin. Legend has it that the Madonna, an object of great veneration even today, wept tears from her unusually large eyes during the Battle of Zenta against the Turks in 1697, and in so doing miraculously secured victory against the infidels.

Visiting the Stephansdom

Although the cathedral **opening hours** are daily 6am–10pm, tourists are discouraged from sightseeing during religious services. In practice, this means **visiting times** are restricted to Monday to Saturday 9am to noon & 1 to 5pm, Sunday 12.30 to 5pm. Entrance is free, though to have a proper look at anything beyond the transept, you really need to join a **guided tour** (Domführung) at a cost of €4. These half-hour tours run Monday to Saturday 10.30am and 3pm, Sunday 3pm, with English tours daily at 3.45pm (April–Oct only), and evening tours at 7pm (June–Sept only; 1hr 30min; €10); you meet just inside the cathedral by the main door. Additional charges are made for the catacombs, the Pummerin and the Steffl (see opposite).



The highlight of the cathedral, is without doubt the early sixteenth-century carved stone **pulpit**, with portraits of the four church fathers, sculpted by an unknown artist who "signed" his work by showing himself peering from a window below the pulpit stairs. The filigree work above and below the staircase is masterly, as are the salamanders and toads (now under protective perspex), symbolizing good and evil. The Moravian sculptor, Anton Pilgram, who was until recently thought to be responsible for the pulpit, can be spotted peeping

out of the wall of the north aisle, in polychrome, below one of his works, the now defunct organ case.

Beyond the transepts, the **choir** is roped off, and only visitable by guided tour (see box, p.67). At the far end of the north choir aisle, however, you should just be able to make out the winged **Wiener Neustädter Altar**, a richly gilded masterpiece of late-Gothic art, whose central panels depict *Madonna and Child*, the *Birth of Christ*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Coronation of Mary* and the latter's

death, all sculpted in high relief out of wood. Below to the left lies the **Donor's Tomb**, adorned with sandstone effigies of Rudolf IV and his wife Catherine of Bohemia (they're actually buried in the catacombs), once richly gilded and peppered with precious stones. In the Apostles' Choir to the south stands the glorious red-marble **Tomb of Emperor Friedrich III**. In amongst the 240 statues, 32 coats of arms and numerous scaly creatures that decorate the tomb is the emperor's mysterious acronym AEIOU (for more on which, see p.210).

The catacombs

A stairway in the north transept leads down into the **catacombs** (guided tours only: every 30min Mon–Sat 10–11.30am & 1.30–4.30pm, Sun 1.30–4.30pm; €4), which, initially at least, are a bit disappointing, having been over-restored in the 1960s. It's here that Rudolf IV and his wife rest with other early Habsburg rulers and sundry ecclesiasticals. Beyond a small chamber filled with bronze caskets holding the entrails of the later Habsburgs is the entry to the damp, dimly lit labyrinth of eighteenth-century catacombs, which were closed in 1783 after the stench became too overpowering. Around 16,000 locals are buried here, their bones piled high in more than thirty rooms; in the final chamber, there's a particularly macabre pile left over from a medieval plague pit. You exit the catacombs via a secret staircase that deposits you outside the cathedral beside the place where Mozart's body was blessed before being buried in St Marxer Friedhof.

Mozart in Vienna

It's almost as difficult to avoid images of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756–91) in Vienna as it is in his home town of Salzburg, for it was in Vienna that Mozart spent the last decade of his life, during which he composed nearly all his most famous works. Mozart moved here in March 1781 after a summons from his employer, the irascible Archbishop of Salzburg, Count Colloredo, who was visiting his sick father in the city. Within three months Mozart had resigned from his post as court organist to the archbishop, or "arch-oaf" (*Erzlümmel*) as he called him in his letters, causing a rift with his overbearing father, who was assistant *Kapellmeister* in Salzburg. The relationship was further strained when Mozart, against his father's wishes, moved in with the all-female Weber family, and grew particularly attached to one of the daughters, Constanze. In August 1782 Mozart married the 19-year-old Constanze in the Stephansdom. Their union appears to have been happy, despite most biographers' misogynist attacks on Constanze as unworthy of his genius. Mozart himself hated to be parted from her, if his letters – "I kiss and squeeze you 1,095,060,437,082 times" – and the fact that he rarely left her side, are anything to go by.

After giving many concerts as conductor and pianist, Mozart turned his hand again to opera, enjoying his greatest success in July 1782 with what is now the least known of his major operatic works, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Escape from the Harem*). It was after hearing *Die Entführung* for the first time that the emperor Josef II is alleged to have said: "Too beautiful for our ears, and an awful lot of notes, dear Mozart"; to which Mozart replied, "No more notes than necessary, Your Majesty!" Such tales have led to a popular belief that Mozart and Josef were constantly feuding over artistic issues: in his letters, however, Mozart's criticisms of the notoriously stingy emperor were on purely financial matters.

Mozart's next opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), was premiered in May 1786 to a decidedly mixed reception, running for just nine performances. This was partly because its subject matter, in which a lecherous count is prevented from seducing a servant girl by an alliance between the serving classes and his

Around Stephansplatz

Stephansplatz was badly bombed in the war, and few of the other buildings are worthy of mention, though you might want to visit the **Dom- and Diözesanmuseum** (Tues–Sat 10am–5pm; €7; ⓦ www.dommuseum.at) on the first floor of the Zwettlhof; access is via Stephansplatz 6 on the north side of Stephansplatz. There are some arresting medieval sculptures in wood and some kitsch Baroque pieces, like the Madonna shrine, whose cloak opens up to reveal God (forming her body), surrounded by a host of worshippers' faces. The highlights, though, are the fourteenth-century stained-glass window of an angel from the Stephansdom, and the dimly lit treasury of monstrances and macabre reliquaries, including St Leopold's hipbone, a piece of the Virgin Mary's belt and a smidgen of holy blood.

A much more intriguing ecclesiastical treasure trove can be seen at the Treasury of the Teutonic Order or **Schatzkammer des Deutschen Ordens** (May–Oct Tues, Thurs & Sat 10am–noon, Wed & Fri 3–5pm; €4; ⓦ www.deutscher-orden.at), spread over five rooms on the second floor of the Deutschordenshaus; enter from Singerstrass 7, one block south of Stephansplatz. The treasury's varied collection, assembled by seven centuries of Grand Masters, ranges from the mundane – seals, coins and crosses – to the bizarre: an adder's tongue used for testing food for poison, and a red coral salt-cellar tree hung with the fossils of sharks' teeth. Before you leave, be sure to pop inside the *sala terrena* on the ground floor to admire the Baroque trompe l'oeil decor.

own long-suffering wife, was controversial – as a play it had already been banned in Paris and Vienna. Josef II obviously liked it, however, inviting the cast to give a special performance at his summer residence at Laxenburg. And Figaro's subversive overtones went down a storm in Prague, where Mozart premiered two later operas, *Don Giovanni* and *La Clemenza di Tito* (*The Clemency of Tito*), both of which were written in Vienna. Mozart's final work was his *Requiem*, commissioned anonymously by an "unknown messenger" in the last year of his life. Only after Mozart's death did the patron's identity become known: it was the recently widowed Count Franz Walsegg-Stuppach, who wished to pass the composition off as his own. In the end it became Mozart's own *Requiem*, still unfinished when he died during the night of December 4–5, 1791, after two weeks of rheumatic fever. Few biographers have forgiven Constanze for not attending the funeral service at the Stephansdom; others assert that she was too distraught to attend. She has also been criticized for having the *Requiem* completed by one of Mozart's pupils, Sussmayr, so as to get the final payment – though this seems fair enough for a widow left with two children to raise (and apparently it was Mozart's suggestion on his deathbed).

Yet more anecdotes surround the generally accepted rivalry with the *Kapellmeister* Antonio Salieri, though this, too, has been overplayed. Salieri was primarily an opera composer, while Mozart, at least until 1786, was known chiefly as an instrumental composer and virtuoso pianist. Some went as far as to suggest that Salieri himself poisoned Mozart, an allegation strenuously denied by Salieri on his deathbed years later, but to no avail: Alexander Pushkin dramatized it, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov made it into an opera, and most famously, *Amadeus*, Peter Shaffer's play on the subject, was made into an Oscar-winning film by Miloš Forman. Mozart was buried in a pauper's grave in the **St Marxer Friedhof** (daily: April & Oct 7am–5pm; May & Sept 7am–6pm; June–Aug 7am–7pm; Nov–March 7am–dusk), by the Landstrasser Gürtel (tram #18 or #71).

The **Mozarthaus Vienna** (daily 10am–8pm; €9; ⓦ www.mozarthausvienna.at) lies immediately east of the cathedral (to get there, pass through the *Durchhaus* at Stephansplatz 5a and enter at Domgasse 5). Here, on the first floor, Mozart, Constanze and their son, Karl Thomas, lived for three years, during which the composer enjoyed his greatest success. It was Mozart's swankiest accommodation in Vienna, where he even had his own billiards room. The composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel stayed here as Mozart's live-in pupil for two and a half years, and Josef Haydn – who opined that Mozart was "the greatest composer that I know in person or by name" – was a regular visitor. Sadly, however, despite a lavish makeover, the museum is a bit disappointing. A lift whisks you to the third floor, so that you have to wade through two floors of manuscript facsimiles and portraits before you reach the apartment itself. Only one of Mozart's rooms actually retains the original decor of marble and stucco (the Camesina family, who owned the property, were stucco artists). Nevertheless, it's worth a visit here if only for the building's lovely courtyard, the views along Blutgasse, and the chance to hear some of Mozart's music.

Kärntnerstrasse and around

As its name suggests, **Kärntnerstrasse** lies along the old road from Vienna to the southern Austrian province of Carinthia (Kärntner), and beyond to the Adriatic. Widened in the nineteenth century, badly bombed in World War II and pedestrianized in the 1970s, it retains only a few reminders of the days when it was home to the city's luxury retail trade. Nevertheless, it's still a favourite street for promenading and for window-shopping.

Neuer Markt and the Kaisergruft

Kärntnerstrasse's most interesting sights lie off the street itself, most conspicuously in the **Neuer Markt** to the west, formerly the city's medieval flour market, now rather shamefully used as a car park. The centrepiece of the square is the **Donnerbrunnen**, a Baroque fountain designed by Georg Raphael Donner. The nudity of the figures perched on the edge of the fountain – they represent the four Austrian tributaries of the Danube – was deemed too risqué by the Empress Maria Theresia, who had the lead statues removed in 1770 to be melted down into cannon. They were returned unharmed in 1801, and in 1873 replaced by bronze copies: the young male figure of Traun, in particular, depicted dipping his triton into the waters, clearly showed rather too much buttock for contemporary tastes, hence the judiciously placed fig leaf.

The square's grim-looking Kapuzinerkirche hides one of the premier sights in Vienna: its crypt, the **Kaisergruft** (daily 10am–6pm; €4; ⓦ www.kaisergruft.at), which has been the unlikely resting place of the Habsburgs (with just a few notable exceptions) since 1633. The crypt isn't at all gloomy or atmospheric, but it is, nevertheless, an intriguing insight into the Habsburgs' fascination with death. The most onrate tombs are those designed by Rococo artist Balthasar Ferdinand Moll such as the his'n'hers duo containing Karl VI and his wife: his sits on lions, with toothy skulls sporting crowns at each corner; hers sits on eagles, with women in mourning veils at each corner. The main focus and highlight of the crypt is Moll's obscenely large double tomb for the Empress Maria Theresia and her husband, Franz Stephan, immediately to the left as you enter. The imperial couple are depicted sitting up in bed, as if indignantly accusing one another of snoring. Immediately below their feet lies the simple copper coffin of their son, Josef II, who tried to introduce the Viennese to the idea of a reusable coffin. It's all downhill aesthetically after Maria Theresia, though you do get to see **Franz-Josef I**'s sarcophagus, permanently strewn

with fresh flowers. Even more revered is his wife, Empress Elisabeth, who was assassinated in 1898, her tomb draped in Hungarian wreaths and colours. On the other side of the emperor is the coffin of their eldest son, Crown Prince Rudolf, who committed suicide in 1889 (see p.203).

Haus der Musik

Signposts on Kärntnerstrasse point east to the **Haus der Musik** (daily 10am–10pm; €10; Ⓦwww.hdm.at), a hugely enjoyable interactive museum down Annagasse in the headquarters of the Wiener Philharmoniker (Ⓦwww.wienerphilharmoniker.at). On the first floor is a museum dedicated to this world-famous orchestra, which only allowed women to join its ranks in 1996. It comes as something of a surprise, then, to find, on the second floor, a startling, state-of-the-art exhibition on the nature of sound, filled with high-tech installations. To get you into the mood, the walls of the first, bare room vibrate with synthesized prenatal sounds. After a rundown on the biology of the ear, the "laboratory of perception" has beautifully designed touch-screen computers to explore human responses to frequency, volume and so on. Elsewhere, you can watch and stretch sound waves created by your own voice and play around with prerecorded sounds in the dimly lit "sea of voices" room.

On the third floor, the subject is more conventional, with a room to each of the big three classical composers – Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – as well as one each dedicated to Schubert, Strauss, Mahler and Schönberg's modernist posse. The displays are a whole lot more imaginative than all the city's other musical memorials put together. There's plenty of hands-on fun and games: you can isolate each of the parts to Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, have a virtual tour of musically significant parts of Vienna, and do some virtual conducting. There's yet more musical tomfoolery upstairs in the Brain Opera, where you can create your own music on the Gesture Wall, the Rhythm Tree, and finally via a sophisticated visual computer bank of sounds.

Graben and Kohlmarkt

The prime shopping streets of **Graben** and **Kohlmarkt** retain an air of exclusivity that Kärntnerstrasse has lost. Their shops, many looking as if the empire lives on, advertise branches in places such as Karlsbad, Leipzig and Prague. Others still sport the *K.K.* or *k.u.k* emblem – *kaiserlich und königlich* (Imperial and Royal) – the Austrian equivalent of "By Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen". In between these old-fashioned stores are several Art Nouveau edifices and designer jewellers produced by the old man of modern Austrian architecture, Hans Hollein.

Graben

Graben – its name translates as "ditches" – was once a moat that lay outside the Roman camp. It was filled in sometime in the thirteenth century and, like Kärntnerstrasse, was widened at the beginning of the nineteenth century, from which era most of its buildings date. The most conspicuous monument on Graben is the **Pestsäule**, or plague column, a towering, amorphous mass of swirling clouds, saints and cherubs, covered in a cobweb of netting to keep the pigeons off. Ostensibly erected to commemorate the end of the 1679 plague, this monument – like similar ones throughout the empire – was raised on the initiative of the Jesuits, to celebrate deliverance from the Protestant or Turkish "plague". The Pestsäule, in addition to the Hildebrandt-designed Bartolotti-Partenfeld palace, at no. 11 on the corner of Dorotheergasse, are the only

survivors of the Baroque era on Graben. More arresting, though, are the shop fronts by Hans Hollein from the 1960s and 1970s, in particular the Schullin (now Caesars) **jewellers**, Graben 26, a polished marble facade spliced by a seam of gold which trickles down into the doorframe.

Set back slightly from Graben, occupying a little square of its own, is the **Peterskirche**, completed by Hildebrandt in 1733, and without doubt the finest Baroque church in the Innere Stadt. From the outside, the great green oval dome overwhelms the church's twin towers; inside, the dome's fresco by Johann Michael Rottmayr is difficult to discern, leaving the High Baroque side altars and the trompe l'oeil ceiling painting in the choir to create a sense of theatrics. The lavish gilded pulpit is truly magnificent, but the most dramatic work of art is the monument opposite, designed by Lorenzo Matielli and depicting St John of Nepomuk being thrown off Prague's Charles Bridge by some nasty-looking Czech bullyboys, with Václav IV in Roman garb directing the proceedings.

Jüdisches Museum

Just off Graben, up Dorotheergasse, is the city's intriguing **Jüdisches Museum** (daily except Sat, 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm; €6.50; Ⓦwww.jmw.at), halfway up in the Palais Eskeles at no. 11. Vienna was home to the first Jewish Museum in the world, founded in 1896 but forcibly closed by the Nazis in 1938; it wasn't until 1989 that it was finally re-established. On the ground floor, pick up an audioguide and head for the covered courtyard dominated by a giant glass cabinet display of Judaica by artist Nancy Spero etched with quotations from the Torah and other sources, whose prophetic nature is revealed on the walls, over which are scattered photographic images from Jewish culture and history. On the whole, though, the curators have rejected the usual static display cabinets and newsreel photos of past atrocities. Instead, the emphasis of the museum's excellent temporary exhibitions on the first floor is on celebrating Viennese Jewish life and culture, past and present. It's a bold and provocative approach, which succeeds in challenging the viewer's prejudices.

Special exhibitions also occupy part of the second floor, which contains the museum's permanent displays, including freestanding glass panels imprinted with holograms ranging from the knob of Theodor Herzl's walking stick, to a short clip capturing an everyday instance of anti-semitism from 1911. These ghostly images, accompanied by judiciously selected soundbites (in German and English) on Zionism, assimilation and other key issues, pithily trace the history of Vienna's Jewry, juxtaposing the enormous achievements of the city's Jews with its justified reputation as a hotbed of anti-Semitism.

Taking something of a different tack, the third floor contains the museum's *Schaudepot*, or storage depot. The displays of Hanukkah candelabra and other ritual objects in large moveable glass cabinets are deliberately haphazard – they constitute all that is left of the pre-1938 Jewish Museum and include many items pulled from the burnt embers of the city's synagogues, torched in *Kristallnacht*.

Kohlmarkt

Even more than Graben, **Kohlmarkt** is the last bastion of luxury retailing, and kicks off, appropriately enough, with the flagship store of **Julius Meinl** (Ⓦwww.meinl.com), the Harrods food store of Vienna. Further up, at no. 14, is the very *k.u.k.* establishment of **Demel** (Ⓦwww.demel.at), which still advertises itself as an imperial and royal confectioners. Established in 1786 as *Zuckerbäckerei* to the Habsburgs, its very famous and opulent Kaffee-Konditorei dates from 1888. Another Viennese institution is the **Artaria Haus**, a Jugendstil

building set back from the street at no. 9, and faced in marble by Max Fabiani in 1901, the bolted slabs on the first floor anticipating Otto Wagner's Postsparkasse (see p.112). The bookshop of the master mapmakers, Freytag & Berndt (Ⓦ www.freytagundberndt.at), occupies the ground floor, while Artaria & Co themselves (Ⓦ www.artaria.at), publishers of music by the likes of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, live on the first floor.

Michaelerplatz

At the far end of Kohlmarkt lies **Michaelerplatz**, dominated on one side by the exuberant arc and green dome of the neo-Baroque **Michaelertrakt**, the southern gateway into the Hofburg (see p.89), begun in the 1720s by Fischer von Erlach's son, but only completed in the 1890s.

Opposite is the **Loos Haus**, on the corner of Kohlmarkt and Herrengasse, which caused an uproar when it was built in 1910–11 by Adolf Loos. Franz-Josef despised this "house without eyebrows" – in other words, without the sculpted pediments that sit above the windows of most Viennese buildings. Work on the building was temporarily halted due to the protests, and only allowed to continue after Loos had acquiesced to adding bronze flower boxes. Today, with its rich rippled green marble columns that frame the main entrance, it's difficult to see what all the fuss was about. If you want to take a closer look, the bank holds regular exhibitions on the first floor of the building, so feel free to walk in.

The oldest building on Michaelerplatz, and the inspiration for its name, is the **Michaelerkirche** (daily 7am–10pm; free; Ⓦ www.michaelerkirche.at), built in the thirteenth century, though the Neoclassical facade, added in 1792, somewhat obscures this fact. Inside, the church retains its plain Gothic origins, but it's the later additions that are of more interest, in particular the *Fall of Angels*, a Rococo cloudburst of cherubs and angels rendered in alabaster, tumbling from the ceiling above the high altar.

Herrengasse

Herrengasse was the preferred address of the nobility from the time the Habsburgs moved into the Hofburg until the fall of the dynasty in 1918. Its name dates from the sixteenth century, when the Diet of Lower Austria built its **Landhaus**, which still stands at no. 13. Vienna was for centuries the capital of Lower Austria – the region surrounding the city – but in 1986 the small provincial town of St Pölten took over the mantle (see p.159), making the Vienna Landhaus redundant.

Two doors up the street at no. 9, the **Palais Mollard** houses a couple of minor museums. On the ground floor you'll find the **Esperantomuseum** (Mon–Wed, Fri & Sat 10am–2pm, Thurs 3–7pm; €2), a fascinating and totally unexpected little exhibition about the artificial language invented by Polish optician, Dr Ludvik Zamenhof, in 1887. As well as giving you a quick rundown on how Esperanto works, the museum also contains sections on other planned languages such as Interlingua (a kind of grammarless Latin), neo-Slavic, designed to replace the seven or so Slav languages that plagued the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Solresol, a musical language. There's even a chance to hear Hamlet's famous speech in Klingon (spoken by a warrior race in Star Trek). On the first floor is the state-of-the-art **Globenmuseum** (Mon–Wed, Fri & Sat 10am–2pm, Thurs 3–7pm; €3), the largest of its kind in the world. Highlights include two beautifully executed giant globes from late seventeenth-century Venice, one terrestrial and one celestial, the latter covered

in the most wonderful pictorial representations of the constellations and a globe pair by Mercator, the first to depict rhumb lines crossing the meridians at the same angle.

Opposite the Landhaus is the grandiose Italianate **Palais Ferstel**, built in the Ringstrasse style by Heinrich Ferstel in 1860 and home to Vienna's most famous Kaffeehaus, **Café Central**, restored in 1986 primarily as a tourist attraction (though a very beautiful one at that). At the turn of the twentieth century, the café was *the* meeting place of the city's intellectuals, including the first generation of Austrian Socialists and occasional chess adversaries of Leon Trotsky, who also whiled away several years here before World War I. At the entrance to the café is a life-size papier-mâché model of the moustachioed poet Peter Altenberg, another of the café's fin-de-siècle regulars.

Further up Herrengasse, past the café, is the entrance to the **Freyung Passage** – built in the 1860s as part of the Palais Ferstel – an eminently civilized, lovingly restored shopping arcade, which links Herrengasse with Freyung. The focus of this elegant marble passage is a glass-roofed, hexagonal atrium, with a fountain, crowned by a statue of the Donaunixen (Danube Mermaid), whose trickling water echoes down the arcade.

Minoritenplatz

West of Herrengasse, hidden away round the back of the Hofburg, **Minoritenplatz** is a peaceful, cobbled square entirely surrounded by Baroque palaces, now transformed into ministries and embassies. At its centre is the fourteenth-century **Minoritenkirche**, whose stunted octagonal tower is one of the landmarks of the Innere Stadt (the top was knocked off by the Turks during the 1529 siege). Inside, the church is impressively lofty, but it's the kitsch copy of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* on the north wall that steals the show – only close inspection reveals it to be a mosaic. The work was commissioned in 1806 by Napoleon, who planned to substitute it for the original in Milan, taking the latter back to Paris. By the time it was finished, however, Napoleon had fallen from power and the emperor Franz I bought it instead, though it wasn't until 1847 that it arrived back in Vienna.

On the south side of the square stands a magnificent palace built for the emperor Karl VI by Hildebrandt as the Court Chancery, and now the **Bundeskanzleramt** (Federal Chancery), home of the Austrian chancellor and the Foreign Ministry, whose main entrance opens onto Ballhausplatz. It was in this palace that Prince Metternich presided over the numerous meetings of the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15, and here, in the chancellor's office, that the Austro-fascist leader, Engelbert Dollfuss, was assassinated during the abortive Nazi putsch of July 25, 1934.

Freyung and the Mölker Bastei

The Freyung Passage from Herrengasse brings you out onto **Freyung** ("Sanctuary") itself, a misshapen square centred on the Austria-Brunnen fountain. Unveiled in 1846, the fountain bears bronze nymphs representing Austria and the key rivers in the Habsburg Empire at the time: the Danube, Po, Elbe and Vistula. Freyung hosts a **market** selling organic produce (Fri & Sat), and in the run-up to Christmas, there's even a small Christkindlmarkt.

To the north stands the **Schottenstift**, a former Benedictine monastery that contains an impressive art collection in its **museum** (Thurs–Sat 11am–5pm; €5; ⓦwww.schottenstift.at). To view the paintings, buy a ticket from the *Klosterladen* (shop) beside the church, and take the stairs to the first floor of

the monastery. The prize exhibit is the fifteenth-century winged altarpiece that used to reside in the Schottenkirche. Thirteen out of the original sixteen panels survive: one side depicts scenes from the life of the Virgin; the reverse side (originally shown only at Easter) features the Passion. The vivid use of colour, the plasticity of the faces and the daring stab at perspective single this out as a masterpiece of late-Gothic art.

The **Mölker Bastei**, one of the few remaining sections of the old zigzag fortifications that once surrounded the Innere Stadt, can be found on Schreyvogelgasse, to the west of Freyung. The sloping cobbled lane below the fortifications should be familiar to fans of the movie *The Third Man* – it's in the doorway of no. 8 that Harry Lime (played by Orson Welles) appears for the first time. High up on the Bastei itself, at no. 8, is the **Pasqualatihaus** (Tues–Sun 10am–1pm & 2–6pm; €2; Ⓦ www.wienmuseum.at), where Beethoven lived on and off from 1804 onwards (he moved 68 times during his 35 years in Vienna; for more on Beethoven, see p.130). The composer's apartment is now a museum, though there's no indication of how the place might have looked at the time he lived there. Perhaps this is just as well – according to one visitor it was "the darkest, most disorderly place imaginable . . . under the piano (I do not exaggerate) an unemptied chamber pot . . . chairs . . . covered with plates bearing the remains of last night's supper". Instead, you're left to admire Ludwig's gilded salt and pepper pots and battered tin sugar container, or sit down and listen to some of his music.

Am Hof and around

Am Hof is the largest square in the Innere Stadt, an attractive, tranquil spot, marred only by the surface protrusions of its underground car park. The name – *Hof* means both "royal court" and "courtyard" – dates from medieval times, when this was the headquarters of the Babenbergs, who lorded it over Vienna until the Habsburgs took the reins in 1273. The centrepiece of the square is the rather forbidding, matt-black **Mariensäule** (Marian column), erected by the emperor Ferdinand III as a thank-you to the Virgin for deliverance from the Protestant Swedish forces in the Thirty Years War. At the base of the column, blackened cherubs in full armour wrestle with a dragon, lion, serpent and basilisk.

Dominating the square is the **Kirche am Hof**, from whose balcony the end of the Holy Roman Empire was declared in 1806, on the orders of Napoleon. The church's vast Baroque facade, topped by a host of angels, belies the fact that this is, for the most part, a fourteenth-century structure. Inside, it's quite frankly a stylistic mess, with the old Gothic church struggling to get out from under some crude later additions.

Pass under the archway by the Kirche am Hof, head down Schulhof, and you'll come to the **Uhrenmuseum** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €4), a clock museum ranged over three floors at Schulhof 2. Founded in 1917, this is the world's oldest museum of its kind, but it's sadly lacking the information needed to bring the collection alive. Nevertheless, you'll find every kind of time-measuring device from sophisticated seventeenth-century grandfather clocks to primitive wax candles containing tiny lead balls, which drop onto a metal dish as the candle melts.

Judenplatz and around

Taking either of the two alleyways that lead north from Schulhof brings you to **Judenplatz**, one of the prettiest squares in Vienna, now totally dominated by

a bleak concrete mausoleum designed by British sculptor Rachel Whiteread as a **Holocaust Memorial**, and unveiled in 2000. Smothered in row upon row of concrete casts of books like an inside-out library, the bunker-like memorial deliberately jars with its surroundings; a chilling A to Z of Nazi death camps is inscribed into its low plinth. Ironically, Judenplatz already has a much older memorial commemorating the pogrom of 1421, and clearly visible on the oldest house on the square, **Zum grossen Jordan** (The Great Jordan), at no. 2. However, in this case, the inscription, beside a sixteenth-century relief of the *Baptism of Christ*, celebrates the slaughter, when the Jews were driven out of Vienna. The lucky ones fled to Hungary, the rest were burnt at the stake, or – to avoid that fate – killed by the chief rabbi, who then committed suicide.

Judenplatz was originally the site of the city's medieval Jewish ghetto, dating as far back as the twelfth century, and during the building of the Holocaust memorial, excavations revealed the smoke-blackened remains of the ghetto's chief synagogue, which was burnt to the ground in 1421. The foundations, and a few modest finds, can be viewed in the **Museum Judenplatz** (Mon–Thurs & Sun 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–2pm; €4; Ⓦ www.jmw.at), whose entrance is at no. 8. In addition, there's a short video with an English audioguide, and an interactive multimedia exhibition, both on medieval Jewish life in Vienna.

One block north of Judenplatz, on the other side of busy Wipplingerstrasse, lies the **Altes Rathaus**, a dour-looking Baroque palace that served as the city's town hall until 1885. The main courtyard is undistinguished but for

Jews in Vienna

Nine tenths of what the world celebrated as Viennese culture of the nineteenth century was a culture promoted, nurtured or in some cases even created by Viennese Jewry.

Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 1942

Most Jews have mixed feelings about Vienna: the city that nurtured the talents of such Jewish geniuses as Sigmund Freud, Gustav Mahler and Ludwig Wittgenstein also has a justifiable reputation as a hotbed of **anti-Semitism**. The city where the father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, spent much of his adult life is also seen by many as the cradle of the Holocaust, where Hitler spent five years honing his hatred; where in 1986, Kurt Waldheim was elected president, despite rumours that he had participated in Nazi atrocities in the Balkans; and where, as recently as 2000, Jörg Haider's extreme right-wing FPÖ became a partner in a new coalition government.

Jews have lived in Vienna intermittently for around a thousand years, yet have been tolerated only when it suited the powers that be. They've been formally **expelled** twice, first in 1420, when the community was accused of supporting the Czech Hussite heretics (the real incentive for the expulsion was to boost the royal coffers by appropriating the Jews' property). The following year, those that remained – around 200 of them – were burnt at the stake. Apart from a few individual exceptions, Jewish resettlement only took off again at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Ferdinand II established a walled ghetto east of the Danube (now Leopoldstadt). For fifty years Jewish life flourished in the **ghetto**, but as the Counter-Reformation gathered pace, there was pressure from Catholics to banish the Jews altogether. Finally in 1670, Emperor Leopold I once more expelled the community.

The city suffered financially from the expulsion, and with the Turks at the gates a small number of Jewish financiers and merchants were hastily granted the status of *Hofjuden*, or "**Court Jews**", and permitted to resettle. The most famous of the Court Jews was Samuel Oppenheimer, who was appointed chief supplier to the imperial army by Leopold I in 1677. Despite the elevated status of the Court Jews, their

Donner's wonderful **Andromeda Brunnen** from 1741, which depicts the Greek myth in lead relief. The reason to come here, though, is to visit the highly informative **Archives of the Austrian Resistance** (Mon, Wed & Fri 9am–5pm, Thurs 9am–7pm; free; Ⓦ www.doew.at), which has a fascinating permanent exhibition on the Austrian anti-Fascist resistance, with labelling in German and English throughout.

One block north of the Altes Rathaus on Salvatorgasse stands one of Vienna's finest Gothic churches, **Maria am Gestade**, up Salvatorgasse, topped by an elaborate filigree spire depicting the Virgin's heavenly crown, a stunning sight after dark when lit from within. With its drooping, beast-infested pendants and gilded mosaics, the stone canopy of the slender west facade is also worth admiring, best viewed from the steps leading up from Tiefergraben. The unusual interior – the nave is darker and narrower than the choir and set slightly askew – is a product of the church's cramped site, lying as it does on what used to be the shore (*Gestade*) of the Danube. Much of what you see, both inside and out, is the result of nineteenth-century over-restoration, as the church caught fire in 1809 when it was used by the Napoleonic forces as an arms depot.

Hoher Markt and around

It's difficult to believe that the **Hoher Markt**, now surrounded by dour, postwar buildings and packed with parked cars, is Vienna's oldest square. Yet

position was precarious, and it wasn't until Josef II's 1781 **Toleranzpatent** that they were allowed to take up posts in the civil service and other professions and to build their own synagogue. At the same time, the *Toleranzpatent* began the process of assimilation, compelling Jews to take German names and restricting the use of Yiddish and Hebrew.

After the **1848 revolution**, all official restrictions were finally abolished. At this point, there were only around 2000 Jews living in Vienna but over the next sixty years, thousands arrived in the city from the Habsburg provinces, the majority of them settling, initially at least, in **Leopoldstadt**. By 1910, there were approximately 180,000 Jews – almost ten percent of the total population and more than in any other German-speaking city. Though the majority of them were far from well off, a visible minority formed a disproportionately large contingent in high-profile professions like banking, medicine, journalism and the arts. The Rothschilds were one of the richest families in the empire; virtually the entire staff on the liberal newspapers, *Neue Freie Presse* and the *Wiener Tagblatt*, were Jewish; the majority of the city's doctors were Jews, as were most of the leading figures in the Austrian Socialist Party.

Those Gentiles who found themselves sinking into poverty after the stock market crash of 1873 desperately needed a scapegoat and eagerly latched onto anti-Semitism, which was promoted by the Christian Social Party under Karl Lueger, the city's populist mayor from 1897 to 1910. Perversely, however, this virulent anti-Semitism helped to save more Jews than in other more tolerant places, causing thousands to flee the country even before the 1938 Anschluss; by 1941, a total of 120,000 Viennese Jews had escaped. Nevertheless, some 65,000 died in the **Holocaust**, and are now commemorated by the Judenplatz memorial. Currently, the community numbers around 7000 – many of them immigrants from eastern Europe – and is enjoying something of a renaissance, much of it centred once again in Leopoldstadt, maintaining a dozen synagogues and several schools across the city.

this was the heart of the Roman camp, Vindobona, a conduit of which you can see beneath the shopping arcade on the south side of the square (Tues–Sun 9am–1pm & 2–6pm; €2). The square's centrepiece is Fischer von Erlach's **Vermählungsbrunnen**, or Marriage Fountain, depicting the union of Mary and Joseph by the high priest, for which there is no biblical evidence and few iconographical precedents. Even more remarkable is the ornate bronze baldachin and gilded sunburst, held aloft by Corinthian columns with matching ram's-head urns, under which the trio shelter.

The real reason folk crowd into Hoher Markt, however, is to see the glorious Jugendstil **Ankeruhr**, a heavily gilded clock designed by Franz Matsch in 1914, which spans two buildings owned by the Anker insurance company on the north side of the square. Each hour, a gilded cut-out figure, representing a key player in Vienna's history, shuffles across the dial of the clock, and at noon tour groups gather to watch the entire set of twelve figures slowly stagger across to a ten-minute medley of slightly mournful organ music. The identities of the figures, which range from Marcus Aurelius to Josef Haydn, are revealed on the clock's street-level plaque. Before you leave, check out the brackets on the underside of the clock bridge, which feature Adam, Eve, the Devil and an angel.

There's one other sight worth seeking out in the streets around Hoher Markt: the secular medieval **Neidhart-Fresken** (Tues–Thurs 10am–1pm & 2–6pm, Fri–Sun 2–6pm; Tues, Fri & Sat €2, Sun free), at Tuchlauben 19, discovered in 1979 during rebuilding works. Executed around 1400, the wall paintings are patchy but jolly, some of them illustrating the stories of the *Minnesinger* (aristocratic minstrel) Neidhart von Reuenthal, others depicting a snowball fight, a ball game, dancing and general medieval merriment.

Around the Ruprechtskirche

In the 1980s the area around Ruprechtskirche became known as the "Bermuda Dreieck" or **Bermuda Triangle**, the idea being that there are so many bars in these few narrow streets that you could get lost forever. There are still a staggering number of bars hereabouts, particularly along Seitenstettengasse and Rabensteig, but you'd have to do some serious drinking to actually lose your way. During the day, the atmosphere is pretty muted, disturbed only by the few tourists who've come to appreciate the area's narrow cobbled streets and the two main sights: the Ruprechtskirche, the city's oldest church, and the Stadttempel, the only synagogue to survive *Kristallnacht*.

Ironically, it was the building restrictions in force at the time the **Stadttempel** (Mon–Thurs guided tours 11.30am & 2pm; €3; bring your passport) was built in 1826 that enabled it to be the only synagogue (out of 24) to survive *Kristallnacht*. According to the laws enacted under Josef II, synagogues had to be concealed from the street – hence you get no hint of what lies behind Seitenstettengasse 2–4 until you've gone through the security procedures (take your passport) and passed through several anterooms to the glass doors of the temple itself. Despite its hidden location, it suffered some damage in 1938 when this predominantly Jewish area was torched, and it has since been lavishly restored. Designed from top to bottom by Biedermeier architect Josef Kornhäusel, it's a perfect example of the restrained architecture of the period, its top-lit, sky-blue oval dome delicately dotted with golden stars, and its two-tiered curving women's gallery supported by yellow Ionic pillars.

Round the corner from the Stadttempel on Ruprechtsplatz stands the ivy-covered **Ruprechtskirche**, its plain, stout architecture attesting to its venerable age. Founded as long ago as the eighth century, the current building dates partly from the twelfth century and has been much altered and expanded since. Inside,

the vivid reds and blues of the modern stained glass are a bit overwhelming, detracting from the church's uniquely intimate ambience. Mass is still said here, and the space is also frequently used for art exhibitions.

Fleischmarkt to Dr-Ignaz-Seipel-Platz

One block south of the Bermuda Triangle, **Fleischmarkt**, the old meat market, straddles Rotenturmstrasse and extends east as far as Postgasse. Greek merchants settled here in the eighteenth century, and following the 1781 *Toleranzpatent* built their own Greek Orthodox church on Griechengasse. On Fleischmarkt itself, there's another, more imposing **Griechische Kirche**, a stripy red-brick affair redesigned in mock-Byzantine style in 1861 by Ringstrasse architect Theophil Hansen, its decorative castellations glistening with gilt. Opening hours are erratic, and you may not be able to get past the gloomy, arcaded vestibule – the best time to try is on a Sunday – to see the candlelit interior, pungent with incense and decorated with icons and gilded frescoes. Next door to the church is the popular inn, *Griechenbeisl*, a Viennese institution for over five centuries, and now firmly on the tour group itinerary.

One block south lies **Dr-Ignaz-Seipel-Platz**, named after the anti-Semitic leader of the Christian Socials, who became the country's chancellor in 1922. The east side is taken up by the **Alte Universität**, founded by Rudolf IV in 1365, and thus the second oldest university (after Prague) in the German-speaking world. By the eighteenth century, the university had outgrown its original premises, and a more fanciful Baroque extension – now the **Akademie der Wissenschaft** (Academy of Sciences) – was built on the opposite side of the square. The building's barrel-vaulted Freskenraum, decorated with frescoes by Franz Maulbertsch, is occasionally open to the public for exhibitions.

Next door is the **Jesuitenkirche** (also known as the Universitätskirche), whose flat facade rises up in giant tiers that tower over the square. Begun in 1627 at the peak of the Jesuits' power, this church smacks of the Counter-Reformation and is by far the most awesome High Baroque church in Vienna. Inside, the most striking features are the red and green barley-sugar spiral columns, the exquisitely carved pews and the clever trompe l'oeil dome – the illusion only works from the back of the church: walk towards the altar and the painting is revealed as a sham.

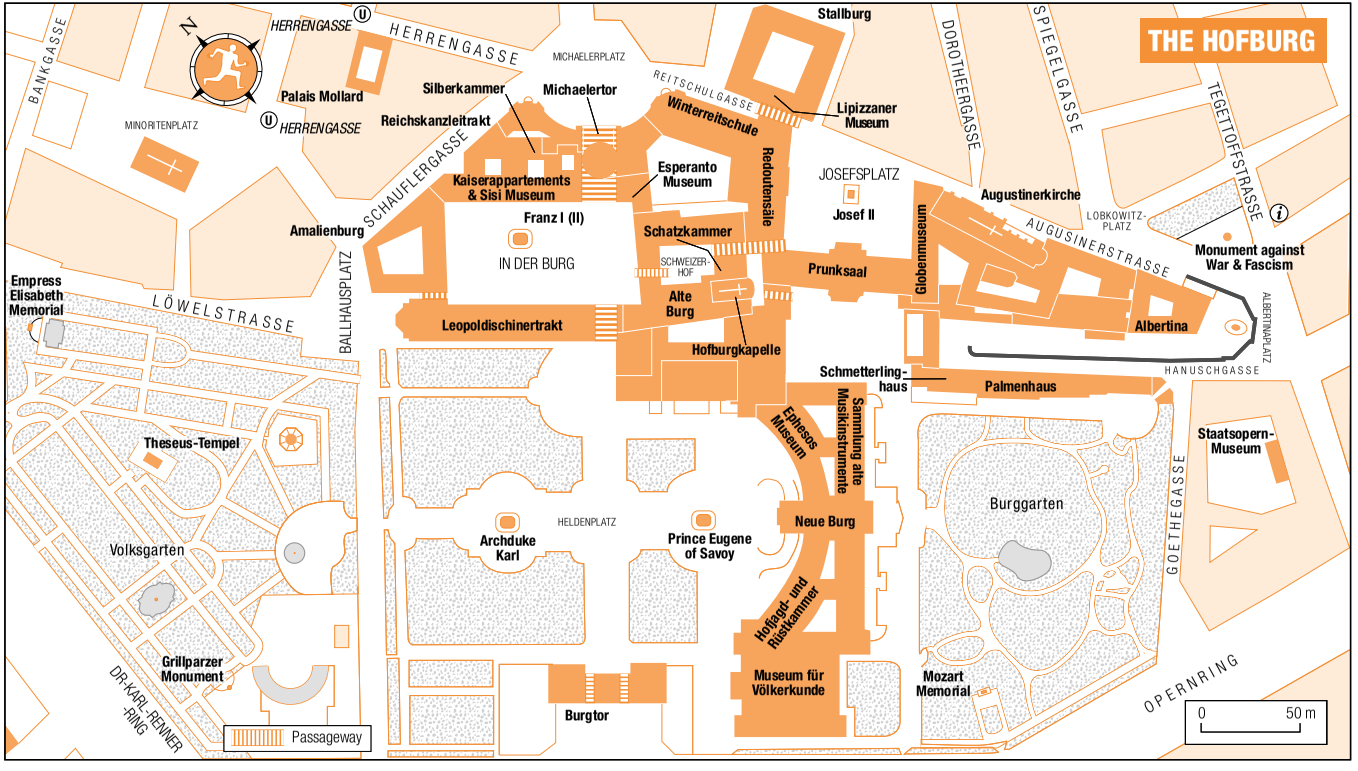
The Hofburg

His gaze wandered up high walls and he saw an island – gray, self-contained, and armed – lying there while the city's speed rushed blindly past it.

Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*

Enmeshed in the southwest corner of the Innere Stadt, the **Hofburg** (Court Palace) is a real hotchpotch of a place, with no natural centre, no symmetry and no obvious main entrance. Its name is synonymous with the Habsburgs, the dynasty which, at its zenith, ruled a vast multinational empire, stretching the length and breadth of Europe. Nowadays, apart from the tiny proportion that has been retained as the seat of the Austrian president, the palace has been taken over by various state organizations, museums and, more prosaically, a conference centre.

Two of Vienna's most famous attractions keep the Hofburg at the top of most visitors' agendas: the **Wiener Sängerknaben** (Vienna Boys' Choir), who perform regularly in the Burgkapelle, and the **Spanische Reitschule**


THE HOFBURG
N
HERRENGASSE
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MINORITENPLATZ
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Silberkammer
Michaelertor
Reichskanzleitrakt
SCHAUFLERGASSE
Kaiserappartements & Sisi Museum
Esperanto Museum
Winterreitschule
REITSCHULGASSE
Redoutensäle
Stallburg
Lipizzaner Museum
DOROTHEERGASSE
SPIEGELGASSE
TEGETTHOFFSTRASSE
JOSEFSPLATZ
Josef II
Augustinerkirche
LOBKOWITZ-PLATZ
AUGUSINERSTRASSE
Monument against War & Fascism
Amalienburg
Franz I (II)
IN DER BURG
Schatzkammer
SCHWEIZER-HOF
Prunksaal
Globenmuseum
Albertina
ALBERTINAPLATZ
Empress Elisabeth Memorial
LÖWELSTRASSE
BALLHAUSPLATZ
Alte Burg
Leopoldischinertrakt
Hofburgkapelle
HANUSCHGASSE
Schmetterling-haus
Palmenhaus
Staatsopern-Museum
Theseus-Tempel
Ephesos Museum
Sammlung alte Musikinstrumente
Volksgarten
HELDENPLATZ
Archduke Karl
Prince Eugene of Savoy
Neue Burg
Burggarten
GOETHEGASSE
Hofjagd- und Rüstkammer
Grillparzer Monument
DR.-KARL-RENNER-RING
Museum für Völkerkunde
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(Spanish Riding School), who trot their stuff in the Winter Reitschule. Getting to see either of them takes time and money, however, which you might well decide you'd be better off spending elsewhere. The tourist office leaflet, *Spanische Reitschule/Wiener Sängerknaben*, explains the intricate schedules of both institutions. The other chief sights are the dull **Kaiserappartements**, where the emperor Franz-Josef I (1848–1916) and his wife Elisabeth lived and worked, the **Schatzkammer**, with its superb collection of crown jewels, and the **Prunksaal**, Fischer von Erlach's richly decorated Baroque library. The palace also boasts several excellent museums and galleries: the **Albertina**, home to one of the world's great graphics collections; several departments of the Kunsthistorisches Museum – the **Hofjagd und Rüstkammer** (Court Hunting and Arms Collection), the **Sammlung alte Musikinstrumente** (Collection of Early Musical Instruments) and the **Ephesos Museum** (Ephesus Museum); and the **Museum für Völkerkunde** (Museum of Ethnology).

Kaiserappartements

The **Kaiserappartements** (daily 9am–5pm; July & Aug until 5.30pm; €9.90; Ⓦ www.hofburg-wien.at) have always been something of a disappointment. Unlike Schönbrunn, virtually every room is decorated in the same style – dowdy, creamy-white walls and ceilings with gilded detailing, parquet flooring and red furnishings. The decor is a legacy of their last full-time imperial occupant, the **emperor Franz-Josef**, who, though a stickler for pomp and protocol at official functions, was notoriously frugal in his daily life. For opulence, you need to see Maria Theresia's apartments at Schönbrunn (see p.121).

In an effort to spice up the proceedings, the palace has installed the crowd-pulling **Sisi Museum**, a hagiographical exhibition on Franz-Josef's wife, the Empress Elisabeth, whose cosseted life was pretty miserable, whose demise was violent and unexpected, and who has long had an almost cultish following among her former subjects. The labelling throughout the palace has improved enormously and there's a free audioguide in English.

On the ground floor, below the Kaiserappartements, seven rooms are devoted to the **Silberkammer** (Silver Collection) – not to be confused with the Schatzkammer (see below), which is where the crown jewels are displayed. The latter has universal appeal, whereas the Silberkammer is something of an acquired taste. The star exhibit is the early nineteenth-century monster Milanese centrepiece in gilded bronze, which stretches for ten metres along a table strewn with classical figures and (more) gilded bronze and crystal urns. As a contrast, check out the stone jugs and salvers, with which the emperor and empress used to wash the feet of twelve ordinary men and women every year on Maundy Thursday.

Schatzkammer

By far the most rewarding of all the Hofburg museums is the imperial treasury or **Schatzkammer** (daily except Tues 10am–6pm; €10; Ⓦ www.khm.at). Here you can see some of the finest medieval craftsmanship and jewellery in Europe, including the imperial regalia and relics of the Holy Roman Empire, not to mention the Habsburgs' own crown jewels, countless reliquaries and robes, gold work and silverware. You can wander at will around the twenty or so dimly lit rooms, though since the labelling is in German only, you might wish to avail yourself of the English-language audioguide (€3).

Centre stage in room 2, you'll find the stunning golden **Crown of Rudolf II** (later to become the Austrian imperial crown), studded with diamonds, rubies,

Emperor Franz Josef I (1848–1916)

Emperor Franz-Josef I was Europe's longest-serving monarch, and Austria's most popular. His 68-year reign was the most sustained period of relative stability the country had ever known, and a stark contrast with what followed. Like his grandfather, Franz I – "Franz the Good" – he was a legend in his own lifetime, and, thanks to the Viennese love of nostalgia, the myth continues today. As historian William Johnston wrote, "Franz-Josef I symbolized more than he achieved". His aversion to innovation was legendary, epitomized by his addiction to the Spanish Court Ceremonial. According to the latter, every guest had to cease eating at the moment the emperor finished each course. Since Franz-Josef was served first and was a very fast eater, his guests rarely got more than a few mouthfuls. Such dinners were also very silent, as no one was permitted to speak unless spoken to by the emperor – and he was more intent on eating. "Lord, this court is stuffy" remarked Edward VII, when Prince of Wales.

Despite the pomp and protocol that surrounded him, Franz-Josef was a simple man. When the first official census was conducted in Austria, he famously wrote down his occupation as "self-employed civil servant". Indeed, his dedication to his job was legendary: he woke at 4am (occasionally 3.30am), washed in cold water and would be at his desk by 5am. Twice a week he would give general audience to any of his citizens who wished to see him – as many as one hundred in a morning (the supplicants were, of course, vetted first). After finishing work around 5.30pm, he would tidy his desk and, towards the end of his life, be in bed by 8.30pm. He had no great love of the arts – "I go to the opera as a sacrifice to my country" he once wrote to his mistress. His only passions were hunting and mountain climbing, and his annual holiday was invariably taken in Bad Ischl, in the Salzkammergut (see p.436).

Franz-Josef's personal life was something of a disaster. He was in awe of his powerful mother, the Archduchess Sophie, who arranged and then proceeded to sabotage his marriage to one of his cousins, Elisabeth (see p.124). Despite Elisabeth's indifference – she spent as little time as possible in his company – Franz-Josef remained dedicated to her all his life. Meanwhile, for over thirty years, he conducted a passionate affair with the Burgtheater actress Katharina Schratt. Matters outside the bedroom were no better. His brother Maximilian was executed in Mexico in 1867, his only son Rudolf committed suicide in 1887, and his wife was assassinated in 1898.

On the morning of November 20, 1916, at the age of 86, Franz-Josef rose at 3.30am for the very last time. His last words to his valet that night were: "tomorrow morning, half past three".

pearls and, at the very top, a huge sapphire. The mother of all baby cots resides in room 5, an overwrought, silver-gilt cradle with silk and velvet trimmings, made in 1811 for the short-lived **Duke of Reichstadt**, or King of Rome, son of Napoleon and his second wife, Marie Louise, daughter of the emperor Franz I. The poor boy must have had nightmares from the golden eagle that hovers over the crib.

In room 7, among the remnants of the **Habsburgs' private jewellery**, there are some serious stones on display, like the 2680-carat Colombian emerald the size of your fist, carved into a salt cellar in Prague in 1641, and the huge garnet, "La Bella", which forms the centre of a double-headed eagle, along with an amethyst and an opal, set in enamel. Another notable treasure is the solid gold Turkish crown of the rebel King of Hungary, István Bocskai, from 1605, inlaid with pearls and precious stones. Room 8 contains the so-called "**inalienable heirlooms**", two pieces collected by Ferdinand I, which the Habsburgs were very keen to hold onto: a giant fourth-century agate dish, stolen from Constantinople in 1204 and thought at the time to be the Holy Grail, and a 2.43 metre-long narwhal's horn, which was originally believed to have come from a unicorn.

The highlights of the whole collection, however, are the **crown jewels of the Holy Roman Empire** in room 11. The focal point is the octagonal imperial crown itself, a superb piece of Byzantine jewellery, smothered with pearls, large precious stones and enamel plaques. Legend has it that the crown was used in the coronation of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman emperor, in 800, but it now seems likely that it dates back only to that of Otto I, in 962. Also on display here is the **Holy Lance**, with which the Roman soldier pierced the side of Christ. The lance – which actually dates from the eighth century – was alleged to have magic powers, so that whoever possessed it held the destiny of the world in their hands. It was in front of this exhibit that the young Hitler is supposed to have had a mystical revelation, which changed the course of his life (and of twentieth-century history), though the story is probably apocryphal.

The last four rooms (13–16) of the Schatzkammer house the substantial dowry that came into Habsburg hands in 1477, when the emperor Maximilian I married the only daughter and heiress of the Duke of Burgundy. By so doing Maximilian also became Grand Master of the **Order of the Golden Fleece**, the exclusive Burgundian order of chivalry founded in 1430, whose insignia are displayed here: heavy mantles embroidered with gold thread, a collar of golden links, from which the "fleece" would hang, and the ram emblem, worn by the 24 knights of the order at all times.

Hofburgkapelle and the Vienna Boys' Choir

The **Hofburgkapelle** (Jan–June & mid-Sept to Dec Mon–Thurs 11am–3pm, Fri 11am–1pm; €1.50), up the stairs above the entrance to the Schatzkammer, was built in the late 1440s by the emperor Friedrich III. Despite numerous alterations over the centuries, the interior retains its Gothic vaulting, carved ceiling pendants, and much of its fifteenth-century wooden statuary protected by richly carved baldachins. It's a favourite venue for society weddings, but the public only get to see it on guided tours. In any case, the real point of going there is to hear the *Hofmusikkapelle*, made up of members of the *Wiener Sängerknaben*, or **Vienna Boys' Choir** (Ⓦwww.wsk.at), supplemented by musicians from the Staatsoper, sing Mass for the tourists on Sunday mornings (and on religious holidays) at 9.15am. To find out how to get tickets, see p.145. Founded back in 1498 by the emperor Maximilian I, the choir was closely linked to the imperial family, for whom they used to perform (famous *Sängerknaben* include Schubert and Haydn). In 1918, the choir went under with the dynasty, but was revived in 1924 and, dressed in ludicrous sailors' uniforms and caps, has since become a major Austrian export. There are, in fact, four choirs, who take it in turns to work, rest, play and tour the world.

Spanische Reitschule (Spanish Riding School)

The Habsburgs' world-famous **Spanische Reitschule** (Ⓦwww.srs.at) originated with the Archduke Karl, brother of Maximilian II, who established several studs at Lipizza, northeast of Trieste (now the Slovene town of Lipica) in the 1570s. By cross-breeding Spanish, Arab and Berber horses, the Lipizzaner strain was born, and subsequently supplied the Habsburgs with all their cavalry and show horses. However, it was only properly expanded by the Spanish-bred emperor Karl VI, who gave the riding school a permanent home in the Hofburg. After World War I, the stud was moved to Piber, near Graz (see p.285), though the silver-white stallions are now bred at both places.

The Spanish Riding School is such an intrinsic part of Vienna's Habsburg heritage industry, it's difficult not to feel a certain revulsion for the whole charade. That said, to witness the Lipizzaners' equestrian ballet is an unforgettable experience; certainly those with any interest in horses will feel compelled to see at least a rehearsal. Performances take place regularly in the splendidly Baroque **Winterreitschule** (Winter Riding School), on the west side of Reitschulgasse, purpose-built by Josef Emanuel Fischer von Erlach in 1735.

Access to the Winterreitschule is from the north side of Josefsplatz. The complicated public schedule of training sessions and performances is written up outside the entrance. There are one or two **performances** (*Vorführungen*) a week (usually Sun 11am) between March and June and September to mid-December, though for at least a month of the latter period the school is usually on tour. Seats **cost** €40–160, and standing room is €26. Even at those prices, the performances are booked solid months in advance; to be sure of a place, you must **check the website**. From February to June and from late August until December, the school also holds **training sessions** (*Morgenarbeit mit Musik or Leichtes Bewegen*; Tues–Sat 10am–noon); seats cost €12 and are sold at the Josefsplatz entrance box office; the queue for tickets is at its worst early on, but by 11am it's usually easy enough to get in.

The cheapest option of all is to visit the **Lipizzaner Museum** (daily 9am–6pm; €5; Ⓦwww.lipizzaner.at), which is housed in part of the *Stallburg* (stables). Along with various equestrian bits (literally) and bobs, you can watch videos of the several set pieces of equestrian ballet, look at the horses snoozing in their stables through a two-way mirror, and catch a clip from the Disney film of the riding school's liberation by the US Army under General Patton in 1945.

Prunksaal

If the Karlskirche (see p.109) is Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach's sacred masterpiece, then the **Prunksaal** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm; €5) is his most stunning secular work. Begun in 1723, it's by far the largest Baroque library in Europe, stretching the full eighty-metre length of the first floor of the central wing of the Hofburg facing onto Josefsplatz. Now part of the Nationalbibliothek, access to the Prunksaal is via the monumental staircase in the southwest corner of Josefsplatz. Not an architect to be accused of understatement, Fischer von Erlach achieves his desired effect by an overdose of elements: massive marble pillars and pilasters, topped by gilded capitals, gilded wood-panelled bookcases, carved balconies accessed by spiral staircases and, from floor to ceiling, more than 200,000 leather-bound books. The space is divided by a transverse oval dome, which is decorated with Daniel Gran's magnificent fresco of the winged figure of Fame holding a rather misshapen pyramid. Among the many celestial groups there's a model of the library, to which the woman depicted as Austrian magnanimity is pointing. At the lowest level Gran has painted trompe l'oeil balconies, on which groups of figures hold scholarly discussions. If you're really keen to work out what's going on, there's an inexpensive guide to the dome fresco available (in English) at the ticket desk.

Augustinerkirche

Masked by Picassi's bland facade, the **Augustinerkirche** (Ⓦwww.augustinerkirche.at), to the south of Josefsplatz, is one of the oldest parts of the Hofburg, dating back as far as the 1330s. Inside, the church has taken a beating over the years, though it retains its lofty Gothic vaulting. The chief attraction is

Antonio Canova's Neoclassical **Christinendenkmal**, in the right-hand aisle, a lavish memorial to Maria Christina, favourite daughter of Maria Theresia, erected in 1805 by her husband, Albrecht, Duke of Saxony-Tetschen. A motley procession of marble mourners heads up the steps for the open door of the pyramidal tomb, while a winged spirit and a sad lion embrace on the other side, and another genius holds aloft the duchess's medallion. They'd be disappointed if they ever got inside, as she's actually buried in the Kaisergruft.

Several more monumental tombs can be found in the **Georgskapelle**, a self-contained, two-aisled chapel, built in the fourteenth century to the right of the chancel, (and only open on Sun after Mass or by appointment Ⓣ533 7099; €2). In the centre of the chapel lies the empty marble tomb of the emperor Leopold II, whose brief reign of less than two years ended in 1792. Balthasar Ferdinand Moll's gilded wall tomb to Count Leopold Daun, on the far wall, is significantly more extravagant, and includes a relief of the 1757 Battle of Kolín in which Daun trounced the Prussians. To get to the Georgskapelle, you must pass through the Lorettokapelle, at the far end of which lies the **Herzgruft** (Heart Crypt), where, arranged neatly on two semicircular shelves, are 54 silver urns containing the hearts of the later Habsburgs. To view the urns, make an appointment with the monks (Mon–Fri 11am & 3pm; Ⓣ533 70 99; free).

Albertina and around

At the far end of Augustinerstrasse, beyond the Augustinerkirche, the refurbished **Albertina** (daily 10am–6pm, Wed till 9pm; €9.50; Ⓦwww.albertina.at) is a mish-mash of a building, incorporating parts of the former Augustinian monastery, the late eighteenth-century Tarouca Palace, and the southernmost bastion of the Hofburg. The entrance is from the vast raised terrace, which overlooks the back of the Staatsoper and is surmounted by a grand equestrian statue of the Archduke Albrecht, who vanquished the Italians at the Battle of Custozza, one of the few bright moments in the otherwise disastrous Austro-Prussian War of 1866.

Founded in 1768 by Albert, Duke of Saxony-Teschen (after whom the gallery is named), the Albertina boasts one of the largest collections of **graphic arts** in the

▲ Albertina

world, with approximately 50,000 drawings, etchings and watercolours, and over a million and a half printed works. Within its catalogue, it has some 43 drawings by Raphael, 70 by Rembrandt, 145 by Dürer – more than any other gallery in the world – and 150 by Schiele, plus many more by the likes of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rubens, Bosch, Picasso, Klimt and Kokoschka.

With such a vast archive, the gallery can only hope to show a tiny fraction at any one time, and in any case, graphics are notoriously sensitive to light. As a result, the Albertina only ever stages temporary exhibitions, devoted to one artist, period or theme: whatever the exhibition, however, it'll be worth a look. The Albertina is also home to the **Filmmuseum** – not, in fact, a museum, but a cinema, which shows a wide range of documentaries and full-length features drawn from its extensive archives (see p.147).

Just outside the Albertina, the city council commissioned Alfred Hrdlicka to erect a **Monument Against War and Fascism**. The monument includes a crouching Jew scrubbing the pavement, recalling the days following the Anschluss, when some of the city's Jews were forced to clean up anti-Nazi slogans with scrubbing brushes dipped in acid. Many Jews found the image degrading, among them Simon Wiesenthal, who successfully campaigned for a proper Holocaust memorial to be erected in Vienna, which can be seen in Judenplatz (see p.85).

Neue Burg

The last wing of the Hofburg to be built – completed in 1913 – was the **Neue Burg**, a piece of pure bombast designed in heavy neo-Renaissance style by Gottfried Semper and Karl von Hasenauer half a century earlier. Semper planned another new palatial wing to mirror the Neue Burg and enclose Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square). In the end, time (and money) ran out, leaving Heldenplatz as a wide, slightly meaningless, expanse, which nonetheless affords a great view across to the Rathaus and Parliament buildings on the Ringstrasse. The Neue Burg is now home to the Nationalbibliothek's main reading room, an offshoot of the Naturhistorisches Museum, and three departments of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Ⓦwww.khm.at). For the Viennese, though, it's forever etched in the memory as the scene of Hitler's victorious return to Vienna on March 15, 1938, when thousands gathered here to celebrate the Anschluss. Hitler appeared on the central balcony of the Neue Burg and declared: "As Führer and Chancellor of the German nation and the German Reich I hereby announce to German history that my homeland has entered the German Reich."

Hofjagd und Rüstkammer (Court Hunting and Arms Collection)

The **Hofjagd und Rüstkammer** boasts one of the world's finest assemblages of armour, mostly dating from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

Visiting the Neue Burg Museums

A single ticket covers the **Hofjagd und Rüstkammer**, the **Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente** and the **Ephesos Museum** (daily except Tues 10am–6pm; €8). There's no English information provided in these museums, so it's a good idea to pick up the free English audioguide. Access to all three collections is via the main entrance. The **Museum für Völkerkunde** (Ⓦwww.ethno-museum.ac.at), which houses the country's chief ethnographical collection, has its own separate entrance, and requires a separate ticket, and is due to re-open by 2009.

Chronologically, the collection begins on the stairs, where you can view two dog-snout-shaped visors – devised to replace the closed helmet, in which it was extraordinarily difficult to breathe – from the estate of Duke Ernst of Austria (1377–1424), who was responsible for starting the weaponry collection. There's a splendid array of jousting equipment, to the right of Saal I, made for the knights of Emperor Maximilian I, and a display of High Renaissance **costume armour** (Saal III), which was meant only for show, its design deliberately imitating the fashionable clothes of the time: puffy sleeves, decorative bands inlaid with gilded silver, and slightly comical pleated skirts. The museum's other great weaponry freak was the manic collector Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol (1525–95), who ordered the bank-breaking **Adlergarnitur** (eagle armour) in Saal V, with its exquisite gilded garniture. Saal VI features some great Turkish arms and armour, while yet more richly decorated suits fill Saal VII, including the "rose-petal" garniture ordered by Maximilian II for the tournament held in Vienna in 1571 to celebrate his brother Karl's wedding. Last of all, there's some truly exquisite Milanese craftsmanship in Saal VIII, including a rapier whose hilt features numerous Moors' heads.

Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente (Collection of Early Musical Instruments)

If you've absolutely no interest in instruments of death, however beautifully crafted, you can skip the entire collection and head straight for the **Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente**. The Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol is again responsible for many of the rare pieces, such as the unique set of six sixteenth-century **dragon-shaped shawms**, in Saal X. The vertically strung **clavicytherium**, in Saal XI, richly inlaid with ivory, ebony, tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl, was actually played by the emperor Leopold I, who was a musician and composer in his own right. Saal XII is loosely based around Josef Haydn, featuring instruments from his day, plus a quadruple music stand for a string quartet; the extraordinarily lifelike beeswax bust of the composer sports a wig of real human hair. The **tortoiseshell violin**, decorated with gold and ivory, in Saal XIII, was bought by Maria Theresia for the imperial Schatzkammer, and, like many such showpieces, is totally unsuitable for playing. Also in this room is an early nineteenth-century **glass harmonica** of the variety invented by the American statesman Benjamin Franklin. Next door the ornate **Marble Hall** (Saal XIV) is still occasionally used as a concert venue and features a "piano of complete harmony", with six rows of keys, and played by both Haydn and Beethoven. In the final room there's a Wiener Werkstatte piano designed by Josef Hoffmann, a harmonium designed to play Schönberg's twelve half-tones and a self-portrait of the artist-composer.

Ephesos (Ephesus) Museum

From 1866, until a ban on the export of antiquities from Turkey stopped the flow early last century, Austrian archeologists made off with a lot of first-class relics from the ancient city of Ephesus. It wasn't until 1978 that the loot was finally publicly displayed in the **Ephesos Museum**, occupying half of the Neue Burg's monumental staircase. The most significant find of the lot is the forty-metre-long **Parthian Frieze**, sculpted in high relief around the second century AD, shortly after the Roman victory in the Parthian Wars. The relief formed the outer walls of a pantheon in honour of the commander of the Roman forces, Lucius Verus, who was joint emperor of the Roman Empire, along with Marcus Aurelius. The adoption of the two by Antoninus Pius (himself adopted by the emperor Hadrian) is depicted at the end of the corridor on the right.

Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnology)

In the section of the Neue Burg nearest the Ring, the **Museum für Völkerkunde** (Ⓦ www.ethno-museum.ac.at), which is due to re-open by 2009, houses a bewildering array of secular and religious artefacts from around the world. Among the most celebrated exhibits in the museum are the **Polynesian** artefacts from Captain Cook's expeditions, snapped up at auction in 1806 by the emperor Franz I. The highlight of the Americas section is undoubtedly the stunning sixteenth-century gilded **Aztec feather headdress** believed, for many years, to have belonged to the emperor Montezuma II, who was stoned to death by his own people for his passivity in the face of Cortés, the Spanish imperialist.

The gardens

The **Volksgarten** (daily: April–Oct 8am–10pm; Nov–March 8am–8pm; free), which forms a large triangular wedge to the northwest of the Neue Burg and Heldenplatz, was opened in 1820 on the site of the old Burgbastei, blown up by Napoleon's troops in 1809. Appropriately enough, given its origins, it was laid out as a formal French garden and now features a Neoclassical temple, and a memorial to the ever-popular Empress Elisabeth. The more informal **Burggarten** (daily: April–Oct 6am–10pm; Nov–March 6.30am–7pm; free) likewise came into being fortuitously after Napoleon blew up the bastions around the Hofburg. It was retained as a private garden for the Habsburgs until 1918, and now lies hidden behind the giant Neue Burg. On the northeast side of the garden stands the elegant glass **Palmenhaus** (Palm House), designed by Friedrich Ohmann in Jugendstil around 1900. The left-hand section provides a suitably steamy environment for the colourful tropical butterflies and moths of the **Schmetterlinghaus** (April–Oct Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6.30pm; Nov–March daily 10am–4pm; €5; Ⓦ www.schmetterlinghaus.at), which until recently lived out in Schönbrunn. The much larger, middle section of the Palmenhaus has been converted into a very swish, palmy **café** (see p.136).

The Ringstrasse

On Christmas Eve 1857, the emperor Franz-Josef I announced the demolition of the zigzag fortifications around the old town and the building of a **Ringstrasse**, a horseshoe of imperial boulevards to be laid out on the former *glacis* (the sloping ground between the walls and the suburbs). Twelve major public buildings were set down along its course between 1860 and 1890 – among them the court opera house and theatre, two court museums, the imperial parliament, the city university and town hall – all at no cost to the taxpayer. By the end of World War I, though, the Habsburgs were no more: as Edward Crankshaw wrote, the Ringstrasse "was designed as the crown of the Empire, but it turned out to be a tomb".

Today Vienna's Ringstrasse looks pretty much as it did in the last days of the Habsburgs, studded with key landmarks. The monumental public institutions remain the chief sights: heading anticlockwise from the northwest, they include the **Votivkirche**, **Rathaus**, **Burgtheater** and **Parlament** buildings, the two monster museums – the **Naturhistorisches** and **Kunsthistorisches** – the new cultural complex of the **MuseumsQuartier**, and the **Staatsoper**. Countless other cultural institutions occupy prime positions on the Ring and

neighbouring Karlsplatz, most notably the **Musikverein**, the city's premier concert venue, the glorious Jugendstil **Secession** building, and three more excellent museums: the **Akademie der bildenden Künste**, the **Wien Museum**, and the **MAK** (Museum of Applied Art). Last, but not least, Karlsplatz also boasts Vienna's most imposing Baroque church, the **Karlskirche**.

Blighted by heavy traffic, the **Ringstrasse** is not much fun to stroll along and its sheer size – 5km from end to end – and uneven distribution of sights precludes exploration on foot. You're better off adopting a hit-and-run approach, making forays from the nearest U-Bahn or tram stop. The best way to circumnavigate and appreciate the scale of the Ring is by **tram** – #1 goes round in a clockwise direction, and #2 runs anticlockwise. From the trams, only Karlsplatz lies entirely hidden from view. Each section of the Ring is **individually named** (eg Schottenring, Dr-Karl-Lueger-Ring, etc) and the account below works **anticlockwise** starting with the Votivkirche.

Votivkirche

The first public building on the Ringstrasse – begun in 1854, even before the emperor had ordered the demolition of the city ramparts – was the **Votivkirche** (Tues–Sat 9am–1pm & 4–6.30pm, Sun 9am–1.30pm; free; Ⓦ www.votivkirche.at), a monumental church built by the Vienna-born architect Heinrich Ferstel in the style of the great Gothic cathedrals of Cologne and Chartres. Built opposite the spot where a Hungarian tailor, János Libényi, had tried to stab the emperor Franz-Josef the previous year – he was thwarted only by the emperor's collar and cap – the church was to be "a monument of patriotism and of devotion of the people to the Imperial House". For all its size, there is something spiritually lacking in the Votivkirche. Built partly to serve the large influx of soldiers to the capital following the 1848 revolution, the church has no natural parishioners, and the gloomy interior, badly damaged in World War II, remains underused and little-visited. The one monument worth a look is the sixteenth-century marble tomb of Count Salm, who commanded Vienna during the Turkish siege of 1529.

Rathausplatz

Rathausplatz is the Ringstrasse's showpiece square, framed by no fewer than four monumental public buildings – the Rathaus, the Burgtheater, parliament and the university – all completed in the 1880s. The most imposing building of the four is the cathedralesque **Rathaus** – strictly speaking the Neues Rathaus – a powerful symbol of the city's late-nineteenth-century political clout, designed by the German architect Friedrich Schmidt in imitation of Brussels' town hall. To get a look at the ornate interior join a 45-minute guided tour in German (Mon, Wed & Fri 1pm except during council sessions or holidays; free; Ⓦ www.wien.gv.at). Concerts are occasionally held in the main Arkadenhof and, in July and August, free opera and classical concerts are beamed onto a giant screen on the main facade. Restaurants set up stalls selling food and beer, though these are as nothing compared to the number of stalls set up during the famous **Christkindlmarkt** (mid-Nov to Christmas; Ⓦ www.christkindlmarkt.at). In the month before Christmas, the area in front of the Rathaus is crowded with stalls selling candy, decorations, traditional wooden toys, and just about every kitsch Christmas present you can think of. Families come to admire the luminous tree decorations, play on the rides, and participate in the workshops for kids within the town hall, while even more folk flock here after work to drink *Glühwein* and *Punsch* to ward off the cold. For

the New Year, the area in front of the Rathaus is turned into a giant outdoor ice-skating rink.

Directly opposite the Rathaus, the **Burgtheater** (Ⓦwww.burgtheater.at) seems modest by comparison – until you realize that the sole function of the theatre's two vast wings was to house monumental staircases leading to the grand boxes. In practical terms, though, the design by Gottfried Semper and Karl Hasenauer was none too successful. Less than a decade after the opening night in 1888 the theatre had to close in order to revamp the acoustics, which were dreadful, and to modify the seating, some of which allowed no view of the stage at all. The auditorium was gutted by fire during the liberation of Vienna in April 1945, and has since been totally modernized. Thankfully the staircase wings survived and still boast their sumptuous decor, including ceiling paintings by Franz Matsch and Gustav Klimt. The easiest way to get to see the Burgtheater is to go to a performance (see p.146); alternatively, you can sign up for one of the daily guided tours (July & Aug daily 2 & 3pm; Sept–June Mon–Sat 3pm, Sun 11am & 3pm; €5.50).

The **Universität** (Ⓦwww.univie.ac.at) – strictly speaking the Neue Universität – is the most unassuming of the four public buildings on Rathausplatz, built in neo-Renaissance style by Heinrich Ferstel in the 1870s. Sadly, it's no longer possible to view the paintings, commissioned for the university's Festsaal, which caused possibly the biggest scandal in the institution's history. When the first picture, *Philosophy* by Gustav Klimt, was unveiled in March 1900, its tangled mass of naked, confused humanity prompted 87 professors to sign a petition of protest. The scandal drew 34,000 onlookers to see the painting in just two months. In the end, Klimt returned his fee and claimed back the paintings. All three were placed in Schloss Immendorf for safekeeping during World War II, but were destroyed in a fire started by retreating SS troops on May 5, 1945.

On the south side of Rathausplatz stands the Neoclassical **Parlament** (Ⓦwww.parlament.gv.at), one of five major Ringstrasse buildings by the Danish architect Theophil Hansen. From street level, it's difficult to see past the giant Corinthian portico and its accompanying wings and pavilions. Stand back, though, and it becomes clear that the huge main body of the building is mostly hidden behind the projecting facade. The main pediment frieze shows the emperor Franz-Josef I reluctantly granting the seventeen peoples of the empire a deeply undemocratic constitution. In front of the building, a gargantuan statue of Athena, goddess of wisdom, sporting a natty gilded plume in her helmet, presides over a fountain served by four writhing mermen. The attic of the main building, meanwhile, is peppered with 76 classical statues, 66 reliefs and 4 bronze chariot groups – these are best viewed from the sides of the building, where you'll find porticoes held up by caryatids modelled on the Erechtheion on the Acropolis. If you want to see inside the building, you can simply turn up for one of the free guided tours in German and English, provided there's no parliamentary session taking place (hourly: mid-July to mid-Sept Mon–Sat 11am–4pm; mid-Sept to mid-July Mon & Tues 11am & 2–4pm, Fri 11am & 1–4pm, Sat 11am–4pm; €4).

Naturhistorisches Museum

The **Naturhistorisches Museum** (daily except Tues 9am–6.30pm, Wed until 9pm; €8; Ⓦwww.nhm-wien.ac.at) is the first of the pompous neo-Renaissance museums that stand on the other side of the Ringstrasse from the Hofburg. Whereas most European cities have tried to pep up their natural history collections with automated dinosaurs, ecological concerns and the like, the hard sell has, so far, passed Vienna by, and little has changed here since the museum

opened in 1889. It's really only as a museum of museums that the Naturhistorisches continues to be of any interest – though, of course, it goes without saying that the building itself is a visual feast.

One of the most successful innovations of recent years has been the **Vivarium**, immediately to your left as you enter the building, a tropical aquarium, vivarium and aviary featuring everything from clown fish and snakes to terrapins and Australian goldfinches. The upper ground floor kicks off with five rooms of minerals (I–V), of little interest to non-specialists, except perhaps room IV, which displays some incredible objects made from precious and semiprecious stones – including a bouquet made with 761 semi-precious stones and 2102 diamonds, given as a wedding gift from Maria Theresia to Franz Stephan – and room V, which has an impressive collection of meteorites. The paleontology section (VII–X) starts in room X – a huge hall decorated with caryatids struggling with weird, evolutionary beasts – where you can find the skeleton of a diplodocus. Many of the **fossils** in room IX originate from the ocean floor of the Miocene Sea (which is where Vienna was fifteen million years ago). The prehistoric civilizations section begins in room XI with the **Venus of Willendorf**, by far the most famous exhibit in the entire museum. This tiny fertility symbol – a stout, limestone figure with drooping breasts – stands just 11cm high, but is something like 25,000 years old, and as such is an object of much fascination.

The west wing includes finds from the prehistoric Beaker folk and various implements, jewellery and arms from Iron Age burial tombs at Hallstaat in the Salzkammergut (see p.449). There's some impressive Thracian silver jewellery, a reconstructed funereal chariot from the Iron Age, and a staggering collection of human skulls. The Kindersaal, beyond, is the museum's one concession to modernization, though this tired children's playroom, built in the 1970s, isn't going to impress kids brought up on interactive, hands-on displays. The zoological exhibits, on the top floor, progress from starfish, corals and seashells in the east wing to a bevy of bears, cats and monkeys in the west. More interesting is room XXI, which contains the **Mikrotheater** (Sat 1.30, 3 & 4.15pm, Sun 11am, 1.30, 3 & 4.15pm; €2), where images from under the microscope are projected onto a screen, and a 3D **panopticon** through which you can take a peek at natural wonders of the world (including bits of the museum itself).

Kunsthistorisches Museum

In a city somewhat overloaded with museums, the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** (Ⓦwww.khm.at) stands head and shoulders above the rest. Thanks to the wealth and artistic pretensions of successive Habsburg rulers, it contains not only the fourth largest collection of paintings in the world, but also Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities, plus sundry objets d'art. So numerous are the exhibits that several of the museum's departments are now housed in the Neue Burg wing of the Hofburg (see p.96).

The Gemäldegalerie (Picture Gallery)

The **Gemäldegalerie** (Picture Gallery), on the first floor, has around eight hundred paintings on display, and it's easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of art. Unlike most big galleries, the Kunsthistorisches makes no attempt to cover a broad span of art history and consequently the collection stops in the late eighteenth century.

Most people come here primarily to see the museum's collection of works by **Pieter Bruegel the Elder** (*c.*1525–69) – the largest in the world. Among the best-known works is *Children's Games*, in room X, an incredibly detailed picture

Visiting the Kunsthistorisches Museum

The Kunsthistorisches Museum (Ⓦ www.khm.at) is open Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 6pm; the picture gallery is also open on Thursdays until 9pm. The nearest U-Bahn is Museumsquartier. The **admission fee** of €10 (free on public holidays) includes entry to the museum's temporary exhibitions and an audioguide to selected exhibits. Even if you spend the whole day here, you'll be pushed to see everything, so it's best to concentrate on just one or two areas. If all the art gives you an appetite, there's a *Gerstner* **café** in the upper foyer offering snacky meals and cakes for under €10. You're also allowed to pop out for a picnic (or a cigarette break), as long as you inform the museum staff. The painting titles are all in German; in our account we've given the English names by which they're usually known. **Guided tours** of the museum in English set off daily at 3pm and cost €3.

The Gemäldegalerie paintings on the first-floor are arranged in parallel rooms around two courtyards: the Italians, plus a few French and Spanish, lie to one side; the Germans, Dutch and Flemish, to the other. The larger rooms, which face onto the courtyards, sport Roman numerals (I–XV), while the smaller outer rooms use the standard form (1–24), though the latter are often unmarked. It would be difficult to concoct a more confusing numerical system, but at least both wings are laid out (vaguely) chronologically. The ground floor galleries are laid out entirely chronologically using only Roman numerals.

with more than 230 children playing 90 different games. Then there's his cycle of seasons, three of which hang in this room: *The Gloomy Day*, *The Return of the Herd* and, the most famous of the lot, *Hunters in the Snow*, in which Bruegel perfectly captures a monochrome wintry landscape. Another favourite is *The Tower of Babel* (inspired, it's thought, by the Colosseum in Rome), illustrating the vanity of King Nimrod – the detail on both the tower and the city below it is staggering.

In one of the smaller side rooms (16), you'll find a colourful *Adoration of the Trinity* by **Albrecht Dürer** (1471–1528), and his *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, where he strolls deep in conversation with his recently deceased friend, the humanist Conrad Celtes. Next door is *The Crucifixion* one of the earliest works by **Lucas Cranach the Elder** (1472–1553), with its gory depiction of Christ, spattered with, and vomiting up, blood, set against a rugged Danubian landscape. Don't miss the unrivalled collection of Mannerist works from the court of Rudolf II, especially those of **Giuseppe Arcimboldo** (1527–93), whose "composite heads" – surrealist, often disturbing, profile portraits created out of inanimate objects – so tickled the emperor that he had portraits made of every member of his entourage, right down to the cook.

Thanks to the Habsburgs' long-term control of the southern Netherlands, the Kunsthistorisches Museum boasts one of the largest collections of paintings by **Peter Paul Rubens** (1577–1640), spread over three rooms. Perhaps the best known of all his works here is *The Fur*, in room XIII, a frank, erotic testament to the artist's second wife, Hélène Fourment, who was 37 years his junior. Rubens was clearly taken with his 16-year-old wife, who appears as an angel, saint or deity, in two other of his late works: the *Ildefonso Altar* and the *Meeting Near Nördlingen*. Also worth seeking out are a couple of Rembrandt portraits, and Vermeer's *Allegory of the Art of Painting*.

Over in the west wing, the museum boasts an impressive selection of Venetian paintings, especially works by **Titian** (*c.*1490–1576), which span all sixty years of his artistic life. Very early works like *The Gypsy Madonna* in room I reveal Titian's debt to **Giovanni Bellini**, in whose studio he spent his

apprenticeship. By contrast, the *Nymph and Shepherd* is a late masterpiece where Titian has used an autumnal palette and very loose brushwork.

There are also works by Bellini himself, his brother-in-law Mantegna and even a mysterious Giorgione, plus several impressive portraits by **Tintoretto** (1518–94), and a voluptuous *Susanna and the Elders*. There's a masterly study in Renaissance harmony and proportion in room 4, with the *Madonna in the Meadow*, painted by **Raphael** (1483–1520) at the tender age of 22 and several works by **Caravaggio** (1573–1610) in room V, including a self-portrait, painted as the severed head of Goliath in *David with the Head of Goliath*.

Lastly, there's a goodly selection of works by **Diego Velázquez** (1599–1660), most of them gifts from the Spanish Habsburgs to the Austrian side of the family, including one of Queen Maria-Anna of Spain, whose hairdo is twice the size of her face.

The ground-floor galleries

The **ground-floor galleries** kick off with the **Egyptian and Near Eastern Collection** (I–VIII), and is guarded by two statues of the fearsome, lion-headed goddess, Sekhmet; the museum owns just four out of the six hundred that once formed a colossal monument to the deity erected at Thebes by Amenophis III. One of the collection's most prized possessions is the *Ersatz Kopf* or **Reserve Head, in Saal IX**, from around 2450 BC, a smooth, stylized head carved in limestone, which exudes an extraordinary serenity. The one topping the postcard sales, though, is the nearby winsome **blue pottery hippo**, whose body is tatooed with papyrus leaves, lotus flowers and a bird, pictorial elements from its natural swamp habitat.

One of the highlights of the **Greek and Roman Antiquities** (IX–XVIII) is the magnificent fourth-century AD **Theseus Mosaic**, discovered in 1815 in a Roman villa near Salzburg. Theseus and the Minotaur are depicted in the middle of a complex geometric labyrinth, out of which the hero escapes with the help of the red thread given to him by Ariadne, who is pictured abandoned to the right. Look out, too, for the first-century AD onyx cameo known as the **Gemma Augustea**, which depicts the emperor Augustus in the guise of Jupiter, seated on a bench alongside Roma, with the emperor's star sign, Capricorn, floating between them; below is the Romans' victory over the Dalmatians under Tiberius.

The **Kunstkammer** or Sculpture and Decorative Arts (XIX–XXXVII) occupies more than half of the ground floor galleries but has been closed since shortly after the 2003 theft of its most precious work, Benvenuto Cellini's **Saliera**, a slightly ludicrous sixteenth-century salt cellar, in which the gold figures of Neptune, holding a phallic trident, and Earth, squeezing her own nipple, appear to be engaged in some sort of erotic see-saw. The *Saliera* was recovered in 2006, but the galleries were still closed for refurbishment (and, presumably, the installation of a better security system) at the time of writing.

MuseumsQuartier

Vienna's dynamic new **MuseumsQuartier** (Ⓦ www.mqw.at) is almost entirely hidden behind the plain but vast façade of the former imperial stables. Opened in 2001, MQ is home to a bewildering array of galleries and museums, performance and arts spaces, as well as some great cafés, restaurants and shops. The lighter of the two cubes that dominate MQ's central courtyard houses the **Leopold Museum**, probably the most universally popular attraction here, containing, among other things, the world's largest collection of works by Egon Schiele. Less successful has been **MUMOK**, the darker cube which provides

Visiting the MuseumsQuartier

The passageways and courtyards of the **MuseumsQuartier** are open 24 hours a day, and many of the cafés and bars are open until the early hours of the morning. The sights themselves all have their own individual opening times and entrance fees, though there are various combined tickets available ranging from the Duo Ticket (€16) which simply gets you into the two main sights, the Leopold Museum and MUMOK, to the Kombi Ticket (€25), which gets you into the above and the KUNSTHALLE Wien and the Architekturzentrum Wien as well. The nearest U-Bahn stations are Museumsquartier and Volkstheater.

a home for Vienna's permanent collection of modern art. Overall, however, MQ has succeeded in carving out a respectably trendy niche for itself on Vienna's crowded cultural map.

The two (more or less) permanent displays are described in detail below, but-there are various temporary exhibition spaces also worth exploring. The central former winter riding school is now used by **KUNSTHALLE Wien** (daily 10am–7pm, Thurs until 10pm; €11.50; Ⓦwww.kunsthallewien.at), the city's top contemporary art gallery, as well as providing a modern dance performance space for **Tanzquartier Wien** (Ⓦwww.tqw.at). Over in two wings of the westernmost courtyard, the **Architekturzentrum Wien** (daily 10am–7pm; €5; Ⓦwww.azw.at), or Az W, houses a permanent exhibition on twentieth-century Austrian architecture, and hosts temporary exhibitions that are always worth a look. Adjacent to the Az W is the **designforumMQ** (Mon–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat & Sun 11am–6pm; €4; Ⓦwww.designforum.at), which puts on exhibitions on product design and advertising.

Last, but not least, there's the **ZOOM Kindermuseum** (Mon–Fri 8.30am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5.30pm; children €5, adults €3.50; Ⓦwww.kindermuseum.at), a real hands-on treat for kids. The introductory section is an enjoyable interactive exhibition for kids aged 6 to 12 exploring everything from sculpture to astronomy; in the ZOOM Studio, children can get stuck into some serious artistic endeavours; those with younger kids should head straight for ZOOM Ocean, which is basically an indoor marine-themed play area, while older kids from 8 to 14 can try their hand at animation and music making in ZOOM Lab. The staff all speak English so language shouldn't be an issue, but you really need to book a few days in advance – numbers are restricted and visits are timed. If you've got kids, it's also worth knowing about the **Kinderinfo** office (Tues–Thurs 2–7pm, Fri–Sun 10am–5pm), which has an indoor play area with a slide and free Internet access for older kids.

Leopold Museum

The light limestone cube of the **Leopold Museum** (daily 10am–7pm, Fri until 9pm; €9; Ⓦwww.leopoldmuseum.org) houses the private collection of Rudolf Leopold, an ophthalmologist by training, who later became an obsessive art collector. Leopold was particularly keen on the works of **Egon Schiele**, which he picked up for next to nothing in the 1950s, but which eventually got him so heavily in debt that he had to strike a deal with the Austrian state: they wrote off his tax bill and built a museum and he allowed his remarkable collection to be shown to the public.

As good a place as any to start is on the ground floor (EG), where you'll find several works by **Gustav Klimt** (1862–1918), ranging from early super-realistic canvases such as *Blind Man* to the dreamy, square-framed landscapes that Klimt

knocked off in his summer holidays on the Attersee. The most important work in the collection, however, is *Death and Life* from 1916, in which the colourful jumble of humanity seems oblivious to Death with his little red cudgel. There are also several canvases by the little-known **Richard Gerstl** (1883–1908), whose works were never exhibited during his brief life. His nude self-portrait from the year of his suicide is as uncompromising and unsparing in its honesty as his, almost Christ-like, *Self-Portrait Against a Blue Background*, from a few years earlier, is striking and unusual.

The top floor (O3) is where the most important pieces by **Egon Schiele** (1890–1918) are displayed. The Leopold Museum owns some superb works (though not all will necessarily be shown at any one time), including Schiele's famous (and much reproduced) *Reclining Woman*. The hypocritical Habsburg establishment that had imprisoned him for "immorality" and "seduction" is the target in *Cardinal and Nun* and *The Hermits*, a double-portrait of Schiele and Klimt dressed in monks' habits from around the same period. There are several autumnal townscapes inspired by Schiele's brief sojourn in his mother's Bohemian hometown, Česky Krumlov (Krumau), and several frankly disturbing, morbid depictions of motherhood: *Blind Mother*, *Dead Mother* and *Mother with Two Children II*. Look out, too, on the top floor, for the emerald-green, fairy-tale-like *Dolomite Landscape* (1913) by **Oskar Kokoschka** and his self-portrait from the end of World War I.

MUMOK

Built to house the city's chief permanent collection of modern art, the dark grey basalt cube of the **Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien**, better known as **MUMOK** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Thurs till 9pm; €8; Ⓦ www.mumok.at), is an intimidating building from the outside. Inside things don't get much better: the layout is confusing – you enter at level 4 – and the lack of natural light is depressing. Still, if you like your art conceptual, there's plenty here to keep you interested and the temporary exhibitions are often excellent.

As far as the (more or less) permanent displays go, you should head down to the basement (level 1), where the **Wiener Aktionismus** archive tells the story of the city's very own extremely violent performance art movement that spilled blood and guts (literally) all over Vienna in the 1960s. Next, head for level 3 where you'll find much more familiar stuff: **Pop Art** by Warhol and Lichtenstein, one of César's ubiquitous crushed cars, a Klein blue painting and John Chamberlain's anti-consumerist scrap-metal sculptures, to name but a few. And don't miss **Yoko Ono**'s *Painting to Hammer a Nail*, which the artist exhibited in London in 1966. It was at the opening that Yoko first met John Lennon. She asked him for five shillings to hammer an imaginary nail into the painting – he replied that he'd give her an imaginary five shillings for the imaginary nail. Instant Karma.

Staatsoper

That the **Staatsoper** (Ⓦ www.wiener-staatsoper.at) was the first public building to be completed on the Ringstrasse – opening in May 1869 with a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* – is an indication of its importance in Viennese society. Prestigious past directors include Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Herbert von Karajan and Claudio Abbado, though each one had notoriously difficult relationships with the opera house. The building itself was designed in heavy Italian Renaissance style – even the Viennese deferred to Italy as the home of opera – and has a suitably grandiose exterior, with a fine loggia

▲ Staatsoper

beneath which carriages could draw up. There are English forty-minute **guided tours** (€5) of the interior, schedules for which are listed beneath the arcade on the east side of the building, though the main auditorium is pretty undistinguished, having been destroyed in an air raid in 1945. In any case, for less than the price of the tour, you can buy one of the hundreds of **standing-room tickets** (*Stehplätze*) that are sold each day on a first-come, first-served basis (and limited to one ticket per person). For the truly obsessed only, there's the **Staatsopernmuseum** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €3), round the corner at Goethegasse 1. One large round room contains a photo gallery of the stars who've graced the opera's stage since it re-opened in 1955.

Akademie der bildenden Künste

Set back from the Ring, on Schillerplatz to the southwest of the Staatsoper, the **Akademie der bildenden Künste**, or Academy of Fine Arts (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €5; ⓦwww.akademiegalerie.at), occupies an imposing neo-Renaissance structure built by Theophil von Hansen in 1876. The Academy itself was founded in 1692, and its main purpose continues to be teaching, but the school also houses a small, much-overlooked study collection. To see the paintings, follow the signs to the **Gemäldegalerie**, turn right after the porter's lodge, head up the stairs to the second floor, then right again to the end of the corridor.

Badly lit and indifferently hung, the Academy's collection is tiny compared with the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Nevertheless, it does have one star attraction: *The Last Judgement* by **Hieronymus Bosch** (*c.*1450–1516), the only Bosch triptych outside Spain. The action in the left panel, *Paradise*, is a taster for the central panel, the *Last Judgement* itself, most of which is taken up with strange, half-animal diabolic figures busy torturing sinners in imaginatively horrible ways; the right panel, *Hell*, looks even less fun. Displayed in the same room as the Bosch are two works by **Lucas Cranach the Elder**: *Lucretia*, a classic Cranach nude, and his moralistic-erotic *Ill-Matched Couple*. The Academy's

Italian works are fairly disappointing, with the exception of **Botticelli**'s *Madonna Tondo*, and Titian's *Tarquin and Lucretia*, a late work replete with loose brushwork and brooding, autumnal colours. In the same room as the last two, look out for Murillo's sentimental *Two Boys Playing Dice*.

It's Flemish and Dutch paintings that make up the core of the Academy's collection, however, with an early **Rembrandt** portrait of a young woman in a black dress, a self-portrait by Van Dyck aged just fourteen, preparatory studies for the Jesuit Church frescoes in Antwerp (and lots of nudes) by Rubens, plus works by Jordaens, Ruisdael, Hoogstraten and David Teniers the Younger. After Bosch, though, the other outstanding masterpiece is the *Family Group in a Courtyard* by **Pieter de Hooch** (1629–84), with its sublime tranquillity and clever play on perspective.

Karlsplatz

Overlooked by the city's most awesome Baroque church, several key Ringstrasse institutions, the gilded **Secession** building and Otto Wagner's wonderful Art Nouveau pavilions, **Karlsplatz** should be one of Vienna's showpiece squares. Instead, the western half is little more than a vast traffic interchange, with pedestrians relegated to a set of seedy subways that stretch north as far as Oper. The problem is there has never been any grand, overall plan at Karlsplatz – the **Naschmarkt** was held here until the 1890s, but when it moved to the nearby **Wienzeile** the heart was ripped out of the square. The city council provided a site for the Secession, but the avenue that should have connected it with the **Karlskirche** never materialized. As a result, it's actually impossible to stand back and admire the Secession building without seriously endangering your life.

Secession

In 1898, Joseph Maria Olbrich completed one of the most original Jugendstil works of art in Vienna: **Secession** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Thurs until 8pm; €6; Ⓦ www.secession.at), headquarters for the artistic movement of the same name (see box). The dome of gilded bronze laurel leaves is the most startling feature – the Viennese dubbed it the "golden cabbage" – though all the building's decorative details are unusual. On the sides, three wise owls suddenly emerge from the rendering, while the main entrance is adorned with a trio of Medusas, a pair of salamanders and copious gilded foliage; above is the group's credo "For every age its art; for art its freedom", replaced after being removed by the Nazis. Don't miss the tortoises at the feet of the ornamental bowls, Georg Klimt's bronze doors with snake handles, and Arthur Strasser's nearby bronze statue of an overweight Mark Antony on a chariot drawn by panthers.

The main hall upstairs continues to stage contemporary art installations, while downstairs in the basement Gustav Klimt's **Beethoven Frieze** is on permanent display. The frieze was intended to last only for the duration of the fourteenth exhibition held in 1902 – in the end it was preserved but not shown to the public again until 1986. With much of the mural consisting of huge blank spaces framed by floating maidens, the frieze looks strangely half-finished. In between the blank spaces are three painted sections: *Longing for Happiness*, where the weak, represented by three naked emaciated figures, appeal to a knight in golden armour; *Hostile Forces*, which features a slightly comical giant ape, with a serpent's tail and wings, and his three daughters, the Gorgons, backed up by the figures of Disease, Madness and Death, and surrounded by decorative sperm and ovaries; and finally *Ode to Joy*, which culminates in an embracing couple, offering, in Schiller's words, *Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!* (this kiss to all the world). There's an excellent English commentary available, which explains in

A brief guide to the Viennese Secession

In 1897, a number of artists broke away from the Künstlerhaus, Austria's leading independent artists' association, and set up their own organization, which they named the **Secession**. The second half of the nineteenth century had seen the ossification of the arts in Vienna, exemplified in architecture by the heavy-handed historicism of the Ringstrasse, and in painting by the flattery of Hans Makart. Broadly speaking, the aims of the new group were to regenerate the arts in Vienna, and to promote "art for art's sake", in particular the latest style, Art Nouveau, known in German as Jugendstil ("youth-style"). "We want to declare war on sterile routine, on rigid Byzantinism, on all forms of bad taste," declared the critic Hermann Bahr, one of the literary champions of the movement. The other major thrust, which sat less happily with the Secession's other commitments, was to strip off the mask of historicism and, as Otto Wagner put it, "to show modern man his true face".

The first president of the Secession was the artist **Gustav Klimt** (1862–1918), who became the group's driving force over the next eight years. Klimt had begun his career as a promising young master of the old ideology. In the movement's striking, purpose-built headquarters, in full view of the Künstlerhaus, he now helped put on a series of exhibitions of new work. Initially, the reception among Viennese critics and the public was good, but the movement ran into trouble when Klimt exhibited *Medicine* here, part of his controversial mural intended for the university. The ensuing public scandal, and the mixed reception given to the group's fourteenth exhibition in 1902, eventually prompted Klimt, along with a number of his followers, to secede from the Secession and retreat from public life for several years.

Between 1898 and 1903, the Secession group published *Ver Sacrum*, a successful arts journal employing lavish Jugendstil typography and layout. Instrumental in its production and design were two of the Secession's co-founders, **Josef Hoffmann** (1870–1956) and **Kolo Moser** (1868–1918), who went on to pursue their interest in applied art, forming the craft-based Wiener Werkstätte in 1902. Hoffmann and Moser left the Secession in 1905 with Klimt, and, although the trio helped organize the Kunstschau exhibitions of 1908 and 1909, these two shows marked a fundamental shift in the art scene. The decorative art of the Secession was left behind in favour of Expressionism, and the two leading artists to emerge from the Kunstschau were Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele.

Though only a peripheral character in the Secession, the architect **Otto Wagner** (1841–1918) was a seminal figure in the Viennese art world throughout the period – as Hermann Bahr wrote, "without Wagner, there would be no Secession, no Klimt group, no applied art". Wagner not only completed more buildings than any other Secession architect, he also designed the entire Stadtbahn system from 1894 to 1901 – many of his stations are extant on the U4 and U6 metro lines. As such, he remains the most high-profile exponent of the Secession style, though his works in fact range from nineteenth-century historicism to twentieth-century Modernism.

Last, but certainly not least, it's worth mentioning the Modernist architect **Adolf Loos** (1870–1933), who published two articles in *Ver Sacrum*, one of which was a stinging attack on Ringstrasse architecture. Loos's relationship with the Secession was brief, however, and in 1908 he published a thinly veiled criticism of the movement in an article entitled "Ornament is Crime".

greater detail the symbolism behind the frieze; also on display are Klimt's preparatory sketches.

The Karlsplatz pavilions, Künstlerhaus and Musikverein

Another Jugendstil masterpiece in Karlsplatz is Otto Wagner's **Pavilion Karlsplatz**, a duo of entrances erected in 1899 on either side of nearby

Akademiestrasse to access the Stadtbahn, and moved here in the 1960s. Wagner broke with his usual design here, partly in deference to the presence of the nearby Karlskirche, adding gold trimmings and a sunflower motif. The green, wrought-iron framework, which was a feature of all his Stadtbahn stations, forms an essential part of the overall design, framing a series of thin marble slabs and creating a lovely, curving, central canopy. Today, one of the pavilions is put into use as a **café** during the summer months, while the other holds exhibition space for the Wien Museum (April–Oct Tues–Sun 1–4.30pm; €2); both have retained some of their original interior decor.

From the terrace between the pavilions, you can also admire two key institutions on the north side of Karlsplatz, both executed in Ringstrasse style. The neo-Baroque **Künstlerhaus** (daily 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm; €12; ⓦwww.k-haus.at) was built in 1881 as the exhibition hall of Austria's Society of Artists (from which the Secession group split in 1897), whose members continue to exhibit their contemporary works on the second floor. Next door stands the **Musikverein** (ⓦwww.musikverein.at), Vienna's top concert hall, designed by the ubiquitous Theophil Hansen in the 1860s. The classical terracotta exterior apes the opera house with its front loggia, but you need to attend a concert in the Grosser Saal to appreciate the unbeatable acoustics and the sumptuous decor with its parade of gilded caryatids. Home to the world-famous **Vienna Philharmonic** (ⓦwww.wienerphilharmoniker.at), the Musikverein's most prestigious event is the annual New Year's Day concert, which is transmitted live around the world to an estimated 1.3 billion viewers.

Karlskirche

Rising majestically above its surroundings, the **Karlskirche** (Mon–Sat 9am–12.30pm & 1–6pm, Sun 1–5.45pm; €6; ⓦwww.karlskirche.at), designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and completed by his son Johann Michael in 1737, is, without doubt, the city's finest Baroque church. A huge Italianate dome with a Neoclassical portico, flanked by two giant pillars modelled on Trajan's Column, and, just for good measure, a couple of hefty Baroque side towers, it's an eclectic and rather self-conscious mixture of styles, built to impress. Even surrounded by the mess that is now Karlsplatz, the church is an awesome sight – and must have been even more so when there was nothing between it and the Hofburg except the open space of the *glacis*.

The church is dedicated to the sixteenth-century saint, **Carlo Borromeo**, though the fact that the emperor and saint shared the same name no doubt played a part in **Emperor Karl VI**'s choice, conveniently glorifying both of them at the same time. The Karlskirche's dual nature – votive and imperial – is nowhere more evident than with the columns, imperial symbols whose reliefs illustrate the life of Borromeo. Your entry fee includes an English audioguide, which can be useful for orientating yourself. Thanks to the windows and lantern in the oval dome, the interior is surprisingly sparse and light, allowing a much better appreciation of Johann Michael Rottmayr's vast fresco than you get of the artist's work in the Peterskirche. The subject is the apotheosis of Carlo Borromeo, along with a bit of Counter-Reformation Luther-bashing – see the angel setting fire to the German's Bible. Everything else in the church finds it rather hard to compete with the sublime beauty of the dome, though Fischer von Erlach's sunburst above the main altar is definitely worth a closer look. Interwoven with the golden rays are stucco clouds and cherubs accompanying Saint Carlo as he ascends into heaven. The small **Museo Borromeo** upstairs contains the saint's vestments, including a terrific cardinal's hat and golden mitre.

Wien Museum Karlsplatz

Housed in an unprepossessing Modernist block to the side of the Karlskirche, the **Wien Museum** (Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; €4, free on Sun; Ⓦwww.wienmuseum.at) is an uneven collection, but it does contain a pretty good fin-de-siècle section – which alone justifies a visit – and excellent temporary exhibitions.

The permanent display begins on the ground floor with the **Roman and Gothic** section, which includes stained-glass windows and sandstone statues salvaged from the Stephansdom after World War II bomb damage. On the first floor, you can view a smattering of spoils from the city's two **Turkish sieges** in 1529 and 1683: a vast red silk banner, Turkish horse plumes sporting crescent moons, several swashbuckling sabres, and an ornate tent lantern. The museum also owns a welter of paintings, including minor works by all the key artists of Austrian **Baroque**. Before you head upstairs, take a look at the model of Vienna shortly before the old zigzag fortifications were torn down in 1857.

On the top floor, by far the most interesting section in the whole museum, the centrepiece is another model of Vienna, this time after the construction of the great Ringstrasse buildings of the late nineteenth century, accompanied by "before" and "after" photos. To the side is an entire living/dining room designed in 1903 by the Modernist architect **Adolf Loos** for his first marital home on nearby Bösendorferstrasse. Despite his diatribes against ornament of any kind, Loos loved rich materials – marble, mahogany and brass – and created for himself a typically plush interior. Nearby hangs **Gustav Klimt**'s *Pallas Athene* from 1898, marking his first use of gold, which was to become a hallmark of his work.

Dotted around the next two rooms are various other works of art from Vienna's artistic golden age. The copy of Max Klinger's nude statue of Beethoven, which formed the centrepiece of the Secession exhibition of 1902, is displayed here, albeit without its coloured marble drapery and seat. The museum also owns a handful of excellent works by **Egon Schiele**, several of which should be on display, among them a typically distraught study of sunflowers from 1909 and the harrowing *Blind Mother II* hang beside a fondly painted view of the artist's bedroom in Neulengbach, a clear homage to Van Gogh, executed shortly before his brief imprisonment on a charge of "displaying an erotic drawing in a room open to children".

Naschmarkt and Linke Wienzeile

The **Naschmarkt** (Mon–Sat 9am–6pm), which stretches away to the southwest of Karlsplatz, is now the city's premier source of fruit and vegetables, and one of the few places where you get a real sense of the city's multicultural make-up: Turks, Arabs, Slavs and Chinese stallholders vie for customers all the way to the Kettenbrückengasse metro station. On Saturdays, the market extends even further west as the weekly flea market joins in. The Linke and Rechte Wienzeile, which run parallel to each other on either side of the market, now function as a six-lane motorway, but there are a couple of sights along the Linke Wienzeile to make a stroll through the market doubly rewarding.

At the far end of the Naschmarkt, near Kettenbrückengasse U-Bahn, are two of Otto Wagner's most appealing Secession buildings from 1899: the apartment blocks of **Linke Wienzeile 38** and **40**. The right-hand building (no. 38) is richly embossed with gold palm leaves and medallions, but the other is more unusual, its pollution-resistant cladding of majolica tiles giving rise to the nickname **Majolikahaus**. To contemporary eyes, the facade looks highly decorative, but what mattered to the Viennese was that – as with the Looshaus – there was virtually no sculptural decoration, and no mouldings or pediments

The Third Man

Filmed on location during the postwar period when Vienna was divided (like Berlin) between the four Allied powers, *The Third Man* (directed by Carol Reed, in 1949) is without a doubt the city's most famous contribution to cinematic history. The stark black and white expressionist cinematography, the haunting theme tune and seedy-bombed-out locations perfectly captured the fatigued, defeated atmosphere of the city at the beginning of the Cold War. In fact, the continuing popularity of the film has spawned a mini tourist industry all of its own. The film itself is shown every Friday and Saturday night at the **Burgkino**, Opernring 19, and has been since the early 1980s. You can visit several of the film's key locations off your own bat – Josefsplatz, the Zentralfriedhof, the Prater – but if you want to check out the sewers, you should join one of the regular **Third Man Tours** (Mon & Fri 4pm; 2hr 30min; €17; Ⓦwww.viennawalks.com), which are conducted in German and English. Film buffs should also head for the **Third Man Museum** (Sat 2–6pm; €6; Ⓦwww.3mpc.net), a couple of blocks south of the Naschmarkt at Pressgasse 25. This private collection includes loads of contemporary photos and news clippings from the period, as well as posters, stills and reviews of the film, plus you get to see a two-minute clip from an old 1930s projector to whet your appetite. There's even a mockup of the Gartenhaus from the Heuriger, run by Anton Karas (who wrote and performed the film's zither theme tune), and the chance to hear over 300 different versions of the tune.

above the windows. Instead, Wagner weaves an elaborate floral motif – a giant, spreading rose tree or a vine of sunflowers – on the tiles themselves.

Schwarzenbergplatz and the Stadtpark

Faced with the din of cars and trams whizzing across its cobbles, it's difficult to believe that the large rectangular traffic intersection of **Schwarzenbergplatz**, one block east of Karlsplatz, was once a fashionable address. At the southern end of the square, dramatically floodlit at night and spurting water high into the air, stands the **Hochstrahlbrunnen** (High Jet Fountain), erected in 1873 as a celebration of the city's nascent modern water-supply system. Once the focal point of the square, it now acts as a kind of screen to hide the bombastic **Russen Heldendenkmal** (Russian Heroes' Monument), behind. A giant curving colonnade acts as the backdrop to the central column, crowned by the Unknown (Soviet) Soldier in heroic stance, flag aloft, sporting a gilded shield and helmet; on the red granite plinth are the names of the fallen and a quote from Stalin (after whom the square was briefly renamed in 1945). For the Viennese, though, it's more a grim reminder of the brutality of the liberators and the privations suffered by those in the city's postwar Russian zones.

Opened in 1862 as the city council's first public park, the **Stadtpark**, to the northeast of Schwarzenbergplatz, is best known for Edmund Hellmer's eye-catching **Strauss Monument** from 1925, with its statue of the "Waltz King", Johann Strauss the Younger, violin in hand. Gilded from head to toe and dramatically floodlit at night, the composer stands framed by a stone arch of naked, swirling naiads.

MAK

One of the most enjoyable museums in Vienna is the **Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst** (Austrian Museum of Applied Art), better known simply as the **MAK** (Tues 10am–midnight, Wed–Sun 10am–6pm; €7.90; Ⓦwww.mak.at), north of the Stadtpark. The highlights of its superlative, highly

eclectic selection of objets d'art, stretching from the Romanesque period to the twentieth century, are Klimt's *Stoclet Frieze* and the unrivalled collection of **Wiener Werkstätte** products. But what really sets it apart is the museum's interior design, for which the MAK gave some of Austria's leading designers free rein to create a unique series of rooms. At the ticket office, you'll be given a plan of the museum in German and English and offered a ludicrously heavy MAK-Guide (for an extra €2), which you should decline, and an audioguide (for an extra €2), which might be worth considering. On the wall of each room there's a slightly pretentious, bilingual introduction by the designer, and a leaflet in English cataloguing and explaining each exhibit. If you've got the time and energy, don't neglect the museum's crowded, off-beat **Studiensammlung** (Study Collection) in the basement. Temporary exhibitions are held, for the most part, in the museum's Ausstellungshalle, whose main entrance is on Weiskirchnerstrasse; the café is excellent (see p.136).

Postsparkasse

The final segment of the Ringstrasse, from Stubentor to Urania, was the last to be laid out, erected mostly in the decade before World War I, and contains one of Vienna's most celebrated pieces of modern architecture, the **Postsparkasse** (Mon–Fri 8am–3pm, Thurs till 5.30pm), completed in 1912 by Otto Wagner. The building still functions as a savings bank, and from the outside it looks something like a giant safety deposit box, its otherwise smooth facade studded with aluminium rivets, used to hold the thin grey marble slabs in place. Aluminium – a new and expensive material at the time – is also used for the delicate glazed canopy over the entrance and, most famously, for the heating cowls, which rise up into the main banking hall like giant curling tongs. It's worth exploring beyond counter 13 to the **museum** (€5), which allows you to see, among other things, Wagner's stripey Kleine Kassensaal (now no longer used) and a model of the building.

The Vorstädte (inner suburbs)

A horseshoe of seven districts – the third to the ninth – form the inner suburbs known as the **Vorstädte**. Neatly confined between the Ringstrasse and the Gürtel, they have remained predominantly residential, though each one is cut through with a busy commercial thoroughfare, the largest of which is the city's main shopping drag, **Mariahilferstrasse**, which divides the sixth and seventh districts. Sights in the Vorstädte are widely dispersed, so it pays to be selective. The one sight that no visitor should miss is the **Belvedere**, in the third district, with its formal gardens and twin-set of Baroque palaces, which house some wonderful works of art. Two other attractions that positively heave with visitors in summer are the wacky **Hundertwasserhaus**, also in the third district, and the **Freud Museum** in the ninth. Even for those not keen on military paraphernalia, the **Arsenal** is worth visiting for its quasi-Moorish architecture alone.

Hundertwasserhaus and KunstHausWien

In 1983 the ageing hippie artist **Friedensreich Hundertwasser** (1928–2000) designed (for free) some council housing on the corner of Löwengasse and Kegelgasse, in an unassuming residential area of Landstrasse, Vienna's third

district. Following his philosophy that "the straight line is godless", he transformed the dour apartment block into **Hundertwasserhaus** (tram N to Hetzgasse from Schwedenplatz U-Bahn), a higgledy-piggledy, childlike jumble of brightly coloured textures that caught the popular imagination, while enraging the architectural establishment. It certainly runs the gamut of styles: a frenzy of oriel windows, loggias, ceramic pillars, glass embellishments, a gilded onion dome, roof gardens and even a slice of the pre-1983 building.

Understandably, the residents were none too happy when hordes of pilgrims began ringing on their doorbells, asking to be shown round, so Hundertwasser obliged with an even tackier shopping arcade opposite, called **Kalke Village**, providing a café (with a stream running along the bar) and information centre to draw the crowds away from the apartments (which are closed to the public), while simultaneously increasing the sales outlets for his artwork. Here, you can get the full Hundertwasser experience, the most disconcerting aspect of which is his penchant for uneven floors.

There's another of Hundertwasser's Gaudíesque conversions, **KunstHaus-Wien** (daily 10am–7pm; Mon €4.50; Tues–Sun €9; ⓦwww.kunsthauswien.com), three blocks north up Untere Weissgerberstrasse, though it has been less successful at attracting visitors; it features another shop and café, and a gallery devoted to Hundertwasser's own life and works, plus other headline-grabbing contemporary artists.

The Belvedere

The **Belvedere** (ⓦwww.belvedere.at) is the finest palace complex in the whole of Vienna, at least from the outside. Two magnificent Baroque mansions, designed in the early eighteenth century by Lukas von Hildebrandt, face each other across a sloping formal garden, commanding a superb view over central Vienna. The man for whom all this was built was **Prince Eugène of Savoy**, Austria's greatest military leader, whose campaigns against the Turks helped push them back from the gates of the city. Today, the loftier of the two palaces, the **Oberes Belvedere**, houses one of the most popular art galleries in Vienna, with an unrivalled collection of paintings by Gustav Klimt, plus a few choice works by Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka. A Kombiticket (€12.50) will let you into both parts of the Belvedere; take tram #71 two stops from Schwarzenbergplatz – or just walk – to get to the **Unteres Belvedere**, from where you can either walk through the garden or jump on tram D from the Ringstrasse to get to the Oberes Belvedere.

Unteres Belvedere

Completed in 1716, at the bottom of the formal gardens, the **Unteres Belvedere** (daily 10am–6pm; €7.50) is a relatively simple, one-storey garden palace, built for Prince Eugène's personal use, rather than for affairs of state or entertainment. Inside, however, it actually preserves more of its lavish original decor than the Oberes Belvedere, and is now used, along with the adjacent Orangerie, for temporary exhibitions.

The architectural highlight of the palace interior is the richly decorated **Marmorsaal** (Marble Hall), which extends over two floors at the central axis of the building. The whole hall is a hymn to Prince Eugène's military prowess, white stucco trophies and reliefs contrasting with the rich red marbling. Extra depth is given to the walls through trompe l'oeil niches and balconies, and to the ceiling by illusory moulding, leading up to Martino Altomonte's fresco featuring Prince Eugène himself enjoying his apotheosis in the guise of Apollo. At ground level, you can admire the original lead

▲ Sphinx, Belvedere Gardens

statues from the Donnerbrunnen on Neuermarkt (see p.80), sculpted by Georg Raphael Donner (1693–1741).

At the far end of the wing lies the **Groteskensaal**, with a "grotesque" decor of birds and beasts, and fanciful floral murals. The inspiration for this style of painting, very fashionable in its day, came from ancient Roman wall decoration, discovered during excavations of underground rooms. The rooms became known as "grottos" and the style of decor was dubbed "grotesque". Look out, too, for the bizarre, hyper-realist "character heads", carved by the eccentric sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1732–83), which are usually displayed here.

By far the most mind-blowing room, though, is the final room, the **Goldkabinett**, a cabinet of mirrors, dating from Maria Theresia's reign, dotted with oriental vases and adorned with yet more "grotesques" painted onto a vast expanse of gaudy, 23-carat-gold panelling. Dominating this small room is *Apotheosis of Prince Eugène*, an explosion of marble by the Dresden court sculptor, Balthasar Permoser, in which a tangle of figures struggles to stay on the plinth. The prince is depicted in full armour, trampling on the enemy, while attempting modestly to muffle the horn of Fame.

Oberes Belvedere

Purpose-built for the lavish masked balls, receptions and firework displays organized by the prince, the **Oberes Belvedere** (daily 10am–6pm; €9.50), completed in 1724, is bigger and grander than the Unteres Belvedere from the outside. Guests would pull up in their coaches underneath the central *sala terrena*, which was glassed in during the nineteenth century and now serves as the ticket office and entrance area of the museum. The permanent galleries, displaying nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, are located on the first and second floors.

If you're here for the Klimts, then head straight upstairs to the **Marmorsaal**, a lighter and loftier concoction than the one in the Unteres Belvedere; it was here that the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 was signed, guaranteeing the Allied withdrawal in return for Austria's neutrality. The permanent collection usually begins in the rooms to the right of the Marmorsaal with works by van Gogh, Richard Gerstl, Egon Schiele and Auguste Rodin.

Gustav Klimt

The gallery's major works by **Gustav Klimt** (1862–1918) are displayed in the third room, including *The Kiss,* displayed behind a protective glass shield, and depicting Klimt himself embracing his long-term mistress, Emilie Flöge. Klimt's use of gilding – derived partly from his father, who was an engraver – proved extremely popular, and the painting was bought for the Austrian state during the Kunstschau of 1908, a rare seal of official approval for an artist whose work was mostly frowned upon by the establishment.

Klimt's ethereal, slightly aloof *Portrait of Sonja Knips*, from 1898, marked his breakthrough as an independent artist, and was the first of several **portrait commissions** of the wives of the city's wealthy Jewish businessmen. In a later example, the *Portrait of Fritza Riedler*, from 1906, Klimt's love of ornamentation comes to the fore, with the sitter engulfed in Egyptian eyes and Velasquez headdress.

Every summer Klimt spent his vacations at the Flöge family house on the Attersee in the Salzkammergut. As a way of relaxing, he liked to paint **landscapes** alfresco straight onto a square canvas, without preliminary sketches. Like Monet, he often used to row out into the middle of the lake and set up his easel on board, finishing the works off after the holidays in his Vienna studio. The gallery owns several of these landscapes and the results are rich, almost flat, one-dimensional tapestries of colour – some almost pointillist – which are easy on the eye and which sold extremely well in the salons (and still do).

Egon Schiele

Klimt actively supported younger artists like **Egon Schiele** (1890–1918), introducing them to his patrons, allowing them to exhibit in shows he organized, and even, in the case of Schiele, passing on his young models after he'd finished with them. Such was the case with the 17-year-old Wally Neuzil, with whom

Schiele enjoyed a four-year affair. *Death and the Maiden* is a disturbingly dispassionate farewell portrait to Wally, painted in 1915, the year they split up. In it, Wally clings to Schiele, who is depicted in deathly, detached decay. The gallery also owns one of Schiele's most famous erotic oil paintings, *The Embrace*, a double nude portrait of the artist and his model.

Schiele went on to marry Edith Harms, who came from a respectable middle-class family, and is depicted in *The Artist's Wife*. Edith's pregnancy in spring 1918 was the inspiration for *The Family*, Schiele's last great painting, which remained unfinished at the time of his death from the influenza epidemic that had claimed Edith's life, and that of their unborn child, just three days earlier (and Klimt's eight months before that). Schiele is the father figure, the child is Schiele's nephew, Toni, but Edith had reservations about posing nude and is clearly not the model for the mother.

Oskar Kokoschka and others

The works by **Oskar Kokoschka** (1886–1980) mostly date from his first ten creative years when he lived in Vienna. After 1915, Kokoschka only occasionally returned, usually staying with his mother, an affectionate portrait of whom hangs in the gallery. Kokoschka's several portraits displayed here contrast sharply with those of Schiele: "A person is not a *still* life", Kokoschka insisted, and he encouraged his sitters to move about and talk, so as to make his portrayals more animated. Kokoschka's *Still-Life with Dead Mutton* from 1909 was painted in the kitchen of the art collector Dr Oskar Reichel, who had commissioned him to paint a portrait of his son. There's a smattering of other artists' works here, too, among them a characteristically dark, intense work by **Emil Nolde**, a Cubist offering from **Fernand Léger** and **Max Oppenheimer**'s evocative *Klingler Quartet*.

Historicism, Realism, Impressionism

The rooms in the west wing, on the other side of the Marmorsaal, are given over to late nineteenth-century paintings. The first few rooms are crowded with works by French Impressionists, among them Manet and Monet, and their immediate predecessors, like Camille Corot. Less well known, and less well thought of now, is the Austrian artist **Hans Makart** (1840–84), whose influence went far beyond painting. He was a high-society figure and, appropriately enough, the room devoted to his works has been decked out with sumptuous furnishings much as Makart's own studio was. On one side hangs the gigantic, triumphant flesh-fest of *Bacchus and Ariadne*; on the opposite wall in long vertical panels are four of the *Five Senses*, featuring typically sensuous Makart nudes.

In the adjacent room, you can admire more work by Makart, whose fame eclipsed several of his more innovative contemporaries, among them **Anton Romako** (1832–89), so much so that the latter's death was rumoured to be suicide. Compared with Makart's studied flattery, it's easy to see why Romako's uncomfortably perceptive psychological portraits were less popular. Look out, too, for Romako's most famous work, *Tegetthoff at the Naval Battle of Lissa*, which again reveals his unconventional approach; there's no hint of heroics, but simply manic fear and foreboding in the expressions of the crew.

Arsenal (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum)

South down Arsenalstrasse lies the city's former **Arsenal**, a huge complex of barracks and munitions factories, built on strategic heights above the city in the wake of the 1848 revolution. At the same time, the emperor Franz-Josef I ordered the construction of the city's first purpose-built museum, the **Heeresgeschichtliches Museum** (daily except Fri 9am–5pm; €5.10;

Ⓦ www.hgm.or.at), designed to glorify the imperial army. All Vienna's leading architects were invited to compete for the commission, and the winning design, a wonderful red-brick edifice by the Ringstrasse architect Theophil Hansen, was completed in neo-Byzantine style in 1856. The museum is laid out over two floors, with the earliest exhibits upstairs. There's a fine selection of trophies from the **Turkish Wars** displayed in the **west wing**, including the vast audience tent of the Grand Vizier. The **east wing** deals with the **Napoleonic Wars**, and concludes with paintings of the disastrous **Austro-Prussian War**, which the Habsburgs lost at Königgrätz in 1866.

The ground-floor west wing contains a glorious collection of **uniforms of the imperial army** and their opponents, but by far the most famous exhibits are the splendid Gräf & Stift convertible in which the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were shot dead in 1914 and with his reverentially preserved bloodstained light-blue tunic. Beyond the café on the ground floor, don't miss the interwar **Republic and Dictatorship** section where you can view the couch on which Dollfuss died during the abortive Nazi coup of 1934, and the bust of Hitler that used to stand in the museum's main foyer. The last room in the east wing is concerned with Austria's **Naval Power**, not something you associate with a land-locked country, though, of course, under the Habsburgs, the empire had access to the Adriatic.

Hofmobiliendepot (Imperial Furniture Collection)

Set back from Mariahilferstrasse, the city's busy, mainstream shopping street, is the expensively revamped Imperial Furniture Depot or **Hofmobiliendepot** (Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; €6.90; Ⓦ www.hofmobiliendepot.at), at Andreasgasse 7, which, despite its uninviting title, is a surprisingly interesting museum – something like a cross between a junk warehouse and an applied arts study collection. Established by Maria Theresia in 1747, the Hofmobiliendepot basically supplied all the furniture needed by the Habsburgs for their various palaces, which, as a rule, were only furnished when members of the family stayed there. It was also a dumping ground for those items of furniture that had gone out of fashion. After 1918, the depot found itself with over 650,000 items, and no imperial family to serve, so it became a museum.

The first room, **Das Erbe** (The Heritage), gives you some idea of the sheer scale of the collection, with its forests of candelabra and coatstands, not to mention the bevy of Biedermeier spittoons. The **Habsburgersaal** panders to imperial nostalgia with Crown Prince Rudolf's ebony high-chair, scallop-shell cot, and, later on, funeral crown, while Maximilian of Mexico's serpent-wrapped walking stick and vastly oversized sombrero have to be seen to be believed. What follows is a whole series of reconstructed **period interiors** ranging from one of Prince Eugène's wonderful chinoiserie rooms to the aforementioned Rudolf's Turkish boudoir. More fun, however, is the **Hygienemöbel** (Sanitary Furniture), which displays imperial commodes, bed-pans and more spittoons through the ages.

Alsergrund

Alsergrund – Vienna's large, roughly triangular ninth district to the north of the Innere Stadt – is dominated by its medical institutions and associations. A vast swath of land is taken up with the Allgemeines Krankenhaus (General Hospital), established by Emperor Josef II in 1784, and now part of the **Universität**. The following year, Josef founded the **Josephinum**, an academy for training military surgeons, next door. Since then, various university

science faculties have relocated here, and the area remains popular with doctors and medical students, as it has done since **Freud**'s day – his museum is now Alsergrund's chief tourist attraction. Alsergrund also boasts one of the few aristocratic summer palaces to survive into the modern era, the **Palais Liechtenstein**, home to the duchy's private art collection.

Josephinum

Founded in 1785 to the northeast of the Allgemeines Krankenhaus, the **Josephinum** (Mon–Fri 9am–3pm, first Sat of month 10am–2pm; €2) is housed in an austere silver-grey palace, set back from Währinger Strasse behind a set of imposing wrought-iron railings (take any tram heading up Währinger Strasse from U-Bahn Schottentor). Having observed at first hand the primitive techniques used by army surgeons during his military campaigns, the emperor Josef II decided to set up an Institute for Military Surgery. The institute was closed in 1872 and now houses, among other things, a museum containing a remarkable collection of anatomical **wax models**, commissioned by Josef II from a group of Florentine sculptors in 1780. The serene, life-size human figures are for the most part presented as if partially dissected, revealing the body's nerves, muscles and veins in full technicolour. Equally beautiful are the original display cases, fashioned from rosewood and fitted with huge, bobbly, hand-blown panes of Venetian glass.

Sigmund-Freud-Museum

Sigmund Freud moved to the second floor of Berggasse 19 in 1891 and stayed here until June 4, 1938, when he and his family fled to London. His apartment, now the **Sigmund-Freud-Museum** (daily 9am–5pm; €7; Ⓦwww.freud-museum.at), is a place of pilgrimage, even though Freud took almost all his possessions – bar his library, which he sold – with him into exile. His hat, coat and walking stick are still here, and there's home movie footage from the 1930s, but the only room with any original decor – and consequently any atmosphere – is the waiting room, which contains the odd oriental rug, a cabinet of antiquities, and some burgundy-upholstered furniture, sent back from London by his daughter Anna after the war. The rest of the flat is taken up with a couple of rooms of photographs, a few rooms of Freud-inspired art, a library, with a CD-Rom on Freud, and a shop. There's a file available with English translations of the museum's captions, or an audioguide in English (for an extra €2).

Liechtenstein Museum

At the turn of the seventeenth century, when the enormously wealthy Liechtenstein family commissioned Domenico Martinelli to build a summer palace, Alsergrund was still a rural idyll. Now hemmed in by nineteenth-century apartment blocks, the Baroque Palais Liechtenstein comes as something of a surprise, hidden away down the backstreet of Fürstengasse. Built on a giant scale, the palace now houses the **Liechtenstein Museum** (Fri–Mon 10am–5pm; €10; Ⓦwww.liechtensteinmuseum.at), which provides a suitably grandiose setting for the family's private art collection, best known for its series of paintings by Rubens. The art collection was displayed here from Napoleonic times until World War II, but with the Red Army approaching, the works were smuggled back to Liechtenstein. The Austrian government claimed the collection had been illegally exported and only recently came to an agreement with the family, which paved the way for the paintings' return.

The **ticket office** is in the imposing *sala terrena*, which is flanked by two grandiose marble staircases and decorated with frescoes by the likes of Johann

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)

Few people are so intimately associated with one place as **Sigmund Freud** is with Vienna. He may have been born to a Jewish wool merchant in Freiberg in Moravia in 1856, and died in 1939 in exile in London, but in the intervening 83 years, he spent most of his life in Vienna. The family moved to the capital when Freud was just 4 years old, and in 1873 he entered the university's medical faculty determined to be a scientist. He took three years longer than usual to complete his degree, and then decided to switch tack and train as a medic at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus. In 1887 Freud began practising as a neuropathologist, experimenting with cocaine, electrotherapy and hypnosis, before eventually coming up with the "pressure technique", using a couch for the first time and asking questions, while pressing his hand on the patient's forehead. He later switched to the method of "free association", during which the patient says whatever comes into their mind. "The aim is modest," Freud said when describing his new science: "to turn neurotic misery into common unhappiness."

In 1896, Freud coined the term "psychoanalysis", and four years later published the book which established his originality, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In it, Freud argued that "all dreams represent the fulfilment of wishes", and that these wishes are often (but not always) sexual. Freud's impact on twentieth-century thought was profound, and several of his discoveries – the death wish, the Oedipus complex, transference, the Freudian slip, penis envy, the oral, anal and phallic stages of childhood, and so on – have become common parlance.

In 1902, Freud founded the **Psychoanalytical Society**, which met every Wednesday evening in his apartment, his wife serving *Guglhupf* and coffee, while academic papers were read and discussed. Freud ruled his disciples with an iron hand, ejecting anyone who disagreed with him, most famously Carl Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst, in 1913. Though Jung accused Freud of having slept with his wife's attractive younger sister, Minna, who lived with the family in Berggasse, Freud was in fact a disappointingly conventional Viennese paterfamilias. "What a terrible man! I am sure he has never been unfaithful to his wife. It is quite abnormal and scandalous," reported one of his fans, the French poet Countess Anna de Noailles, after meeting him. He was happily married all his life to Martha Bernays, a good Jewish *Hausfrau*, who gave birth to and brought up six healthy children. He saw patients without appointment daily from three to four in the afternoon, using the proceeds to buy the (occasionally erotic) antiquities that filled his study; afterwards he would write until as late as three in the morning. Every afternoon, he would walk the entire circuit of the Ringstrasse at a brisk pace; every Saturday evening he played the card game Tarock; every Sunday in summer, the family would dress up in traditional Austrian peasant gear, right down to their Lederhosen, and go mushroom picking in the Wienerwald.

In 1923, he was diagnosed as having cancer of the jaw (he was an inveterate cigar-smoker) and given just five years to live. In the end, he lived another sixteen years in some considerable pain. Shortly after the Anschluss in March 1938, the SS raided Freud's flat and confiscated the family's passports and money. Only through the efforts of his friends was Freud able to escape to Britain on June 4, 1938. Four of his sisters were not allowed to join him and died in the Holocaust. Finally, just over a year after having arrived in London, Freud's doctor fulfilled their eleven-year-old pact, and, when the pain became too much, gave him a lethal dose of morphine.

Michael Rottmayr and Andrea Pozzo. Originally open to the elements so that coaches could draw up here, the *sala terrena* now shelters the family's eighteenth-century gilded coach with its panels of celestial cherubs. The east wing of the ground floor is used for temporary exhibitions; the west wing is occupied by the family's gargantuan library with its green-brown marbling decoration and Rottmayr's trompe l'oeil frescoes. Heading up the east

staircase, which retains its Rottmayr fresco, you come to the **Herkulessaal**, the largest secular Baroque hall in Vienna (and there's a fair bit of competition). Lined with red marble half-pillars topped by gilded composite capitals and interspersed with paintings and gilded reliefs, the hall's crowning glory is the Pozzo's ceiling fresco, which depicts the life of Hercules from the strangling of the snake in his cot to his suicide. There are regular classical concerts in the hall on Sunday afternoons.

The galleries on the first floor are dominated by the paintings of **Pieter Paul Rubens** (1577–1640), with the largest room, Saal VII, taken up almost entirely with the Decius Mus Cycle, depicting the life of the Roman consul, who had to sacrifice his own life in order to secure victory for his army over the Latins. There are plenty of sober portraits to bring you down to earth, one by Frans Hals and a whole series by **Van Dyck**, including a superb portrait of the 19-year-old Maria de Tassis. Lastly, don't miss the surrealist head, *Terra*, by Rudolf II's court painter, Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

Schuberts Geburtshaus

Further north, at Nussdorfer Str 54, stands **Schuberts Geburtshaus** (Tues–Sun 10am–1pm & 2–6pm; €2), the unassuming, two-storey house where the composer was born in 1797. Inside, the charming courtyard has been lovingly restored, with wooden balconies festooned with geranium-filled flower boxes. As so often with Vienna's musical memorials, however, there has been no attempt to reconstruct Schubert's family home, which would have consisted of just one room and a kitchen (the latter survives). In any case, Schubert would have had very little recollection of the place as the family moved down the road, to Säulengasse 3, when he was four years old. So, beyond admiring

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Of all the composers associated with Vienna, **Franz Schubert** fulfils more Romantic criteria than most. He died of syphilis at the age of just 31 (younger even than Mozart), he really was penniless (unlike Mozart, who was just careless with his money), and he never lived to hear any of his symphonies performed (the first one wasn't published until fifty years after his death). The picture would be complete had he died whilst writing his *Eighth (Unfinished) Symphony* – in fact, he abandoned it before he died, and went on, instead, to complete a *Ninth Symphony*.

Schubert was born the eleventh child of an impoverished teacher. At the age of 9 or 10 he was sent to study with the organist at the local church on Marktgasse, where he had been baptized, going on to become church organist, and composing his first mass for the church at 17. In between times, he served as a chorister at the Hofburgkapelle, where he studied under Antonio Salieri, Mozart's famous court rival, before working as an assistant teacher at his father's school for three years. At the end of this period, he became a freelance musician, thanks to financial help from his friends, and spent two summers as music tutor for the Esterházy family. His intensely lyrical chamber music, copious songs – in one particularly productive year he wrote 145 of them – and piano works were popular amongst the Viennese bourgeoisie, and he performed at numerous informal social gatherings, which became known as "*Schubertiaden*".

In his personal life, he was fairly dissolute: a heavy drinker, who frequented "revolutionary" circles, he remained unmarried, his sexual appetite confined to prostitutes. Towards the end of his short life, he fulfilled a lifetime's ambition and met up with his hero Beethoven, though there are no reliable details of the encounter. He was one of the torchbearers at the great composer's funeral, and was buried, according to his wishes, three graves away from him in Währinger Friedhof the following year (he now lies with Beethoven in the Zentralfriedhof; see p.131).

the composer's broken spectacles and his half-brother's piano, there's little to do here but listen to the excerpts from his music.

The Vororte (outer suburbs)

Vienna's vast outer suburbs, or **Vororte**, have a scattering of interesting sights, many of them outdoor attractions that call for a targeted approach, relying on the transport system to get you around. Top of the list, and one of Vienna's most popular tourist attractions, is the Habsburgs' former summer residence, **Schönbrunn**, to the west of the city centre. The palace boasts some of the best Rococo interiors in central Europe, while the surrounding **Schlosspark** is home to the **Tiergarten**, Vienna's zoo. Nearby is the **Technisches Museum**, and further west is the much wilder parkland of the **Lainzer Tiergarten**, a former royal hunting ground that's now a haven for wildlife.

After Schönbrunn, the most popular attraction in the suburbs is the **Prater**, the vast city park and funfair on the east bank of the Danube Canal, famous, above all, for its giant Ferris wheel, or Riesenrad. Another possible day-trip can be made to the **Wienerwald** (Vienna Woods), the forested hills that stretch from the alpine foothills to the southwest of Vienna right up to the doorstep of the capital and offer glorious views over the entire city. Finally, there's the **Zentralfriedhof**, Vienna's awesome Central Cemetery, featuring copious quantities of artistic corpses, including those of Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Schönberg and the Strauss family.

Schönbrunn

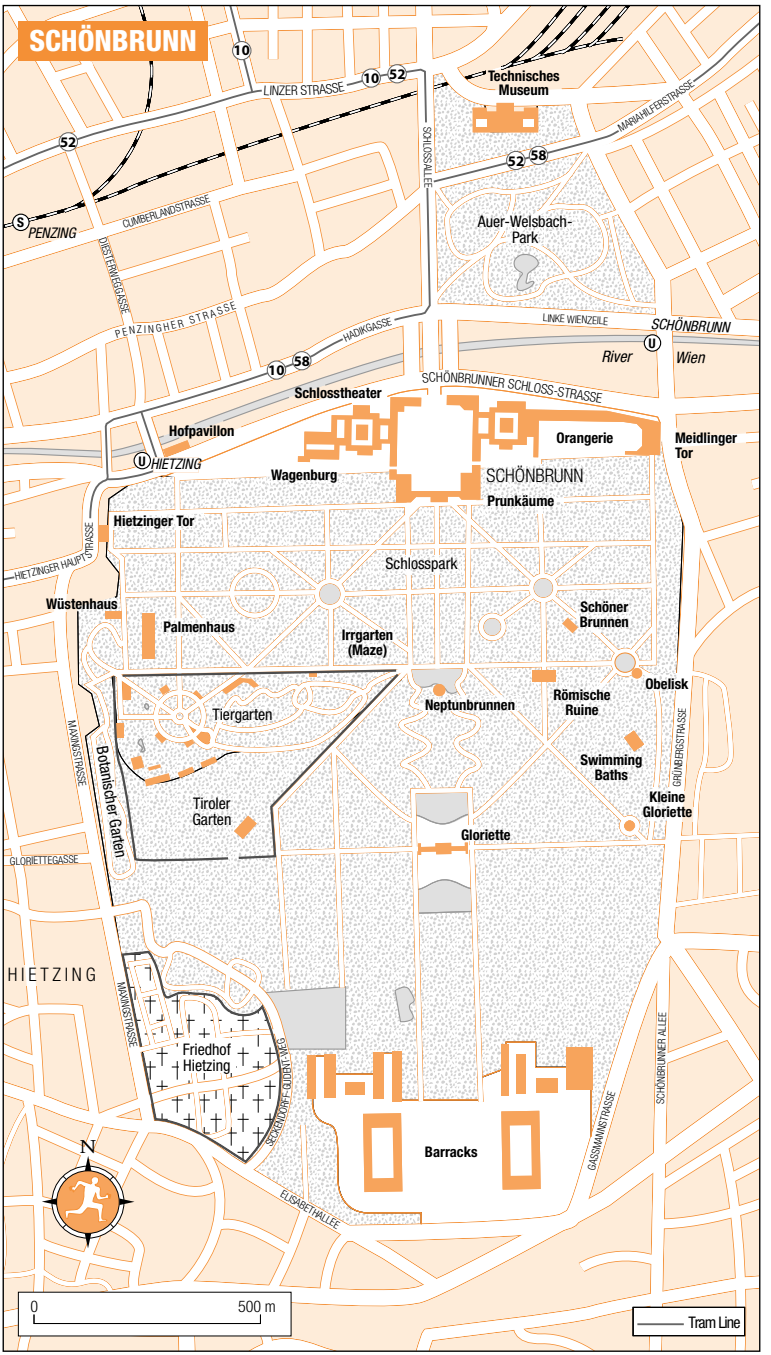
Compared with the hotchpotch that is the Hofburg, the Habsburgs' summer residence of **Schönbrunn** (Ⓦwww.schoenbrunn.at) is everything an imperial

Visiting Schönbrunn

Approaches to the palace suffer from the roar of traffic from the nearby Linke Wienzeile and Schönbrunner Schloss Strasse. Consequently, the best way to **get there** is to head straight for the Meidlinger Tor on Grünbergstrasse from U-Bahn Schönbrunn, rather than struggle along the multilane freeway to the main gates. You could also continue one stop further on the U-Bahn to Hietzing, and dive into the park via the Hietzinger Tor on Hietzinger Hauptstrasse. This brings you into the park nearer to the zoo and the palm house.

To visit the **palace** (daily: April–June, Sept & Oct 8.30am–5pm; July & Aug 8.30am–6pm; Nov–March 8.30am–4.30pm), head for the ticket office on the ground floor of the east wing immediately, as visits are carefully choreographed. Here, you'll be allocated a visiting time; if the palace is busy, you may have to wait a while, in which case you should head off into the gardens or visit one of Schönbrunn's other sights. For the palace, there's a choice of two tours: the "Imperial Tour" (€9.50), which takes in 22 state rooms (skipping the palace's most magnificent Rococo delights), and the "**Grand Tour**" (€12.90), which includes all 40 rooms. For both tours, you're given a hand-held audioguide in English. There are also regular guided visits of the "Grand Tour" in English; these take an hour and cost €14.40.

If you're considering visiting any of the other attractions in Schönbrunn, it might be worth buying a **Gold Pass** (€36), which gets you into all nine attractions. Equally if you're not visiting the palace, but are going to visit the zoo, mazes and glasshouses, be sure to buy a **Kombi-Karte** (€16).


SCHÖNBRUNN
LINZER STRASSE
Technisches Museum
MARIAHILFERSTRASSE
SCHLOSSALLEE
Auer-Welsbach-Park
PENZING
CUMBERLANDSTRASSE
DIETRICHGASSE
PENZINGHER STRASSE
HADIKGASSE
LINKE WIENZEILE
SCHÖNBRUNN
River
Wien
SCHÖNBRUNNER SCHLOSS-STRASSE
Schlosstheater
Hofpavillon
HIETZING
Wagenburg
Orangerie
Meidlinger Tor
SCHÖNBRUNN
Prunkäume
Hietzinger Tor
HIETZINGER HAUPTSTRASSE
Schlosspark
Wüstenhaus
Palmenhaus
Irrgarten (Maze)
Schöner Brunnen
Obelisk
Römische Ruine
Neptunbrunnen
Tiergarten
MAXINGSTRASSE
Swimming Baths
GRUNBERGSTRASSE
Kleine Gloriette
Botanischer Garten
Tiroler Garten
Gloriette
GLORIETTEGASSE
Werkbundsiedlung
HIETZING
Friedhof Hietzing
SCHLOSSBERGGASSE
Barracks
GASSMANNSTRASSE
SCHÖNBRUNNER ALLEE
ELISABETHALLEE
N
0
500 m
Tram Line
Lainzer Tiergarten

palace should be: grandiose, symmetrical and thoroughly intimidating. Built over the course of the eighteenth century to a design by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, it contains nearly 1500 rooms and, in its day, would have housed more than a thousand servants.

The exterior is plain, but inside, there's a superb array of Baroque and Rococo **Prunkräume** (State Rooms), dating from the time of the Empress Maria Theresia, the first of the Habsburgs to make Schönbrunn the official imperial summer residence. There's also a fine collection of imperial carriages in the outbuilding of the **Wagenburg**, plus temporary exhibitions in the **Orangerie**. In the **Schlosspark**, you'll find the **Tiergarten** far more uplifting than most inner-city zoos, which combines easily with visits to the nearby tropical **Palmenhaus**, desert-like **Wüstenhaus** and **Irrgarten** (Maze).

The palace

Compared to the sterility of the Hofburg's state apartments, Schönbrunn's **Prunkräume** are a positive visual feast. That said, not every room is worthy of close attention, so don't feel bad about walking briskly through some of them. Whichever tour you're on (see box), the entrance is via the **Blauerstiege** (Blue Staircase) on the ground floor of the west wing. If you're on the "Imperial Tour", you'll miss the nine private apartments of Franz-Josef – no great loss – entering at **Elisabeth's Salon**, which smack even less of her personality than those in the Hofburg. The decor, in fact, mostly dates from the time of the **empress Maria Theresia**, a century or so earlier, and the walls of the next three rooms are lined with portraits of the empress's numerous offspring. Two of her sons went on to become emperors, Josef II and Leopold II, but the most famous of the lot was her youngest daughter, **Marie Antoinette**, who married Louis XVI and followed him to the guillotine in 1793. Under her portrait in the nursery is the only piece of furniture sent back to Vienna by the French after her execution.

The first of the more elaborate state apartments is the **Spiegelsaal** (Mirror Hall), where, in 1762, the 7-year-old Mozart performed a duet with his older sister, Nannerl, in the presence of the Empress Maria Theresia and family, and famously "sprang on the lap of the empress, put his arms round her neck and vigorously kissed her", according to his father. From here, both tours take in the splendid **Great Gallery**, a vast long hall, heavy with gilded stucco embellishments and originally lit by over 4000 candles.

It's worth venturing from here into the **Small Gallery**, which lies through the three arches to the south of the Great Gallery, to take a peek at the two chinoiserie rooms – one round, one oval – to either side. The parquet flooring is sublime, as are the oriental lacquer panels set into the wainscoting, and the numerous pieces of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain, that give the rooms their names. The final room for those on the "Imperial Tour" is the **Ceremonial Hall**, displaying five large paintings by pupils of the court painter Martin van Meytens. The majority are concerned with recording the elaborate festivities that accompanied the wedding of Maria Theresia's eldest son, Josef II, to Isabella of Parma, in 1760. The magnifying glass, over the section that depicts the wedding's opera performance, helps you pick out Mozart and his father from the crowd, though the family didn't in fact arrive in Vienna until two years after the event.

It was next door in the beautiful surroundings of the **Blue Chinese Salon**, on November 11, 1918, that the last Habsburg, Emperor Karl I, signed the document renouncing "all participation in the affairs of state" – though he refused to abdicate formally and would later attempt to regain the Hungarian half of his title. The lightness of this room is in complete contrast to the next,

the oppressively opulent **Vieux-Laque Room**, with its black-and-gold lacquer panels, exquisite parquetry and walnut wainscoting. During his two sojourns at Schönbrunn, Napoleon is thought to have slept in the neighbouring walnut-panelled **Napoleon Room**, lined with Brussels tapestries depicting the Austrian army in Italy. It was here, too, that his son died at the age of just 21. After Napoleon's demise in 1815, the boy was kept a virtual prisoner here in the palace, the stuffed skylark on the table among his few companions.

Despite its name, only three items in the remarkable **Porcelain Room**, designed by Isabella of Parma, are genuine Meissen porcelain: the chandeliers, the clock and the wall bracket. The rest of the decor is carved from wood and painted over in blue and white to appear like porcelain. Further on, the **Millions Room** – the most precious of all the rooms in Schönbrunn – is so called because it's estimated that Maria Theresia paid over a million silver florins to have it decorated. Unfortunately, the priceless miniature seventeenth-century Persian watercolours of life in the Moghul court are somewhat overwhelmed by the richly gilded cartouches set into the Caribbean rosewood panelling.

Passing quickly through the next few rooms, you reach **Maria Theresia's Bedroom**, though the empress never actually slept in the room's red velvet and gold-embroidered four-poster bed. Instead, the room was used exclusively for *levées* – a kind of official breakfast in bed – during her frequent pregnancies. This was also the modest little room in which Franz-Josef was born in 1830. The last few rooms of the "Grand Tour", last used by the **Archduke Franz Karl** (Franz-Josef's epileptic father), and his wife, the Archduchess Sophie, are of little

Empress Elisabeth (1837–98)

The **Empress Elisabeth** – or **Sisi** as she is affectionately known – was born into the eccentric Wittelsbach dynasty that produced the likes of "Mad" King Ludwig II of Bavaria, one of Elisabeth's cousins. She enjoyed a carefree, if sheltered upbringing, only to find herself engaged to the Habsburg **emperor Franz-Josef I** – another cousin – at the age of 16, after an entirely public two-day courtship. Franz-Josef was undoubtedly devoted to his new bride, but he was also in thrall to his mother, the Archduchess Sophie, who was a control freak obsessed with court ceremonial. She prevented Elisabeth from fulfilling her role either as empress or as mother to her children, by hand-picking her ladies-in-waiting and having the children removed from her care as soon as they were born. Later, Elisabeth advised her daughter "marriage is an absurd institution. At the age of 15 you are sold, you make a vow you do not understand, and you regret for thirty years or more that you cannot break it."

By 1860, having dutifully produced a male heir, Elisabeth developed a pathological aversion to the Viennese court, abandoning her children and husband and fleeing to Madeira for six months. She spent much of the rest of her lonely life travelling around Europe, under the pseudonym of the Countess Hohenembs. She crisscrossed the continent, never staying in one place for long, and went on interminable cruises – she had an anchor tattooed on her shoulder – alarming her companions by asking to be tied down on deck during storms. She sought solace in fencing, hiking, riding – she was reckoned to be one of the finest horsewomen in Europe – and in the preservation of her beauty. When her cousin, King Ludwig, and then her only son Rudolf, committed suicide within a few years of each other, she became convinced that she too was mentally unstable. From then on, she dressed only in black, and carried a black fan that she used to hide the wrinkles that were beginning to appear on her face. As she herself put it, "When we cannot be happy in the way that we desire there is nothing for it but to fall in love with our sorrows."

interest, decked out as they are in the usual red damask and white panelling, and stuffed full of Habsburg portraits.

Wagenburg

The main exhibition space of the **Wagenburg** (April–Oct daily 9am–6pm; Nov–March Tues–Sun 10am–4pm; €4.50), to the west of the main courtyard, is crowded with nineteenth-century carriages, which are of limited interest to the non-specialist. The best thing to do is pass quickly to the far end of the hall, where, below the gallery, there's an odd assortment of carriages and sleighs used to transport the imperial offspring. The most poignant is the phaeton designed for Napoleon's son "L'Aiglon", with mudguards in the shape of eagle's wings; the bees that decorate the sides of the carriage were the Bonaparte family symbol. The highlights of the collection, though, lie beyond the gallery, where you'll find the Baroque and Rococo carriages of the Habsburgs. The most outrageous is the **coronation carriage of Franz Stephan**, enormously long, dripping with gold plate, and fitted with windows of Venetian glass. The ornate carriage opposite, painted entirely in black, was used during oath ceremonies for the new emperor, which coincided with periods of official mourning for the previous incumbent. Somewhat incredibly, the relatively modest **red-leather litter,** studded with over 11,000 gold-plated nails and buckles, was used solely for transporting the Archduke of Austria's hat from Klosterneuburg to Vienna and back for the aforementioned ceremonies. The richly carved, gold-plated carousel or **racing sleigh of Maria Theresia** is the sole survivor of a

The similarities between Elisabeth's life and that of Princess Diana are difficult to ignore. Her marriage to Franz-Josef was the wedding of the century. The emperor was marrying a "fairytale princess", whom he hardly knew, and, despite public appearances, the marriage was a disaster. Like Diana, Elisabeth won over people's hearts with her beauty. Yet many Viennese resented her frequent absences from the capital, and were appalled at her pro-Hungarian sentiments. The issue of Franz-Josef and Elisabeth, like that of Charles and Diana, divided folk then, as it does historians and biographers now: either Franz-Josef was a boorish, unimaginative prig, who visited brothels during their honeymoon, or Elisabeth was a frigid, neurotic, narcissistic brat, obsessed with her looks. After a brief reconciliation between the imperial couple, which resulted in the birth of Marie Valerie, the only child Elisabeth took any great notice of, Sisi and Franz-Josef remained irrevocably estranged. She even encouraged Franz-Josef to get a mistress, introducing him to the actress Katharina Schratt, "very much as a woman might put flowers into a room she felt to be dreary", as Rebecca West put it.

By 1897, Elisabeth's health began to deteriorate rapidly – a condition partly brought on by anorexia – to the extent that she could barely walk. Despite her poor health, and her obsession with madness and death, few would have predicted her final demise. On September 10, 1898, the empress was assassinated by an Italian anarchist, Luigi Luccheni, on Lake Geneva. A local newspaper had unwisely announced the arrival of the empress, who was attempting to travel incognito. As she was about to board a steamer to go to tea with Baroness Rothschild, Luccheni rushed up and stabbed her in the heart. Like the empress, Luccheni had also been wandering aimlessly around Europe, in his case looking for someone famous to kill. He was fixed on assassinating the Duke of Orléans, but, when he failed to turn up in Geneva as planned, resolved to attack the Austrian empress instead. Naturally enough, thousands turned out for Sisi's funeral in Vienna and, over the years, the manner of her death has ensured that the myth and intrigue around her life remain as compelling as ever.

whole set built in the shape of giant scallops for the special ladies' tournament held in the Winter Reitschule in 1743.

Schlosspark

Even if you've no interest at all in visiting the interior of Schönbrunn, it's worth coming out here to enjoy the glorious **Schlosspark** (daily: April–Oct 6am–dusk; Nov–March 6.30am–dusk; free) concealed behind the palace. The lower section is laid out in the formal French style, with closely cropped trees and yew hedges forming an intricate network of gravel paths. The first thing that strikes you is the central axis of the **parterre**, decorated with carefully regimented flowerbeds, leading to the **Neptunbrunnen** (Neptune Fountain), and, beyond, to the triumphal arch of the Gloriette, the focal point of the park. If you do nothing else in the Schlosspark, you should make the effort to climb up the zigzag paths to the **Gloriette**, built to celebrate the victory of the Habsburgs over the Prussians at the 1757 Battle of Kolín, and now housing a swanky café, from which – if you can get a window table – you can enjoy the view down to the palace.

Hidden amongst the foliage to the east of the Neptunbrunnen are various architectural follies, sprinkled throughout the park in the late eighteenth century. Particularly fine are the **Römische Ruine** (Roman Ruins), built as a stage set for open-air concerts and theatre. Close by is the outlet of the original **Schöner Brunnen**, a small grotto pavilion in which the nymph, Egeria, dispenses mineral water from a stone pitcher into a giant scallop basin.

A substantial segment of the palace gardens is taken up by the **Tiergarten** (daily: Feb 9am–5pm; March & Oct 9am–5.30pm; April–Sept 9am–6.30pm; Nov–Jan 9am–4.30pm; €12; ⓦwww.zoovienna.at), which, originating in the royal menagerie founded by Franz Stephan back in 1752, is the world's oldest zoo. Here, the imperial couple would breakfast among the animals, in the octagonal pavilion designed for them by Jean-Nicholas Jadot, and decorated with frescoes by Guglielmi depicting Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The pavilion is now a very good restaurant and, along with several of the original Baroque animal houses, makes this one of the most aesthetically pleasing zoos any captive animal could hope for.

After admiring the tropical plants of the **Palmenhaus** (daily: May–Sept 9am–6pm; Oct–April 9.30am–5pm; €4), head for the adjacent **Wüstenhaus** (daily: May–Sept 9am–6pm; Oct–April 9am–5pm; €4), a dry hothouse filled with cacti and inhabited by desert mammals, geckos, lizards and "peaceful doves". Last of all, don't miss out on the **Irrgarten and Labyrinth** (daily: April–Aug 9am–6pm; Sept & Oct 9am–5pm; Nov 10am–4pm; €2.90), the two mazes close by the Neptunbrunnen.

Technisches Museum

The **Technisches Museum** (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm; €8.50; ⓦwww.technischesmuseum.at) lies on the opposite side of Auer-Welsbach-Park from the main gates of Schönbrunn, and is accessible from the Westbahnhof via tram #52 or #58. Leave yourself at least half a day to do this innovative, hands-on museum justice, and relax in the knowledge that the café on the ground floor is relatively good and inexpensive.

The museum's main entrance is in the basement, where you also find the **Nature and Knowledge** section. On the left, in Concepts and Consequences, you can learn about some basic scientific concepts from gravity to electromagnetics, while entertaining you at the same time – don't miss the fog chamber at the far end. Also on this level is the interactive Phenomena and Experiments gallery, where, among

other things, you can play at animation and doodle with a giant spirograph. Upstairs is the hangar-like Main Hall, with an early aeroplane and a satellite suspended above it. The giant, wind-up energy contraption by the entrance to the Energy section is good fun, as is the daily showing at the **High Voltage Room**, for which you must book in advance (€1.50).

The special exhibitions on the next floor up are definitely worth investigating. So too is the **Transport** section on the top floor, which boasts the oldest car in working order, dating back to 1875, along with a load of old bicycles, motorbikes, model ships, trams and trains. Also on this floor is the **medien.welten** section, which concentrates on digital technology and its application in printing, photography and music. You can also book yourself into one of the twice-daily showings at the **Virtual Reality Theatre** (€3), where you don special glasses, brandish a laser rod and enter a 3D virtual world.

Next door to the Technisches Museum is Vienna's **IMAX cinema** (Ⓦwww.imax.at), which has daily showings of usually less-than-brilliant 2D and 3D IMAX films, specially shot to show off the 180-degree projection system; tickets currently start at around €10 for a 35- to 50-minute long film.

Lainzer Tiergarten

In the far west of Vienna, some 3km beyond Schönbrunn, lies the former imperial hunting reserve of **Lainzer Tiergarten** (daily: April–Oct 8am–6.30pm or later; Nov–March 9am–5pm or later; free), enclosed within a 25-kilometre-long wall by the emperor Josef II in the late eighteenth century. Since 1923, however, the reserve has been the wildest of Vienna's public parks – with virtually no traffic allowed inside its boundaries and no formal gardens – and serves as the best place in summer to escape the urban sprawl. It may not boast the views of Wienerwald, but you're more likely to spot wildlife here, including wild boar, mouflons and, most easily, deer; in addition, the famous Lipizzaner horses of the Spanische Reitschule spend their summer holidays in the park.

The park's chief sight, the **Hermesvilla** (Tues–Sun: April–Sept 10am–6pm; Oct–March 9am–4.30pm; €4), built in 1882 by the emperor Franz-Josef in an effort to ingratiate himself with his estranged wife, Elisabeth, is just ten minutes' walk from the main gates of Lainzer Tor, at the end of Hermesstrasse. Carl Hasenauer was employed to design the building, and Gustav Klimt and Hans Makart were among those commissioned to decorate the interior. In the end, though, the villa failed to entice Elisabeth back to Vienna, and she stayed there only very occasionally. The house is now used to host exhibitions put on by the Wien Museum. Even if the particular show doesn't grab you, the well-preserved interior is rewarding, though there's no information on the Hermesvilla's imperial days, nor anything specific on the empress Elisabeth herself.

To reach the Lainzer Tor, take tram #60 from Hietzing U-Bahn to Hermesstrasse, then it's fifteen minutes' walk or bus #60B down Hermesstrasse itself.

Kirche am Steinhof

Despite its limited opening hours, anyone with even a passing interest in Jugendstil architecture should make the effort to visit the **Kirche am Steinhof** (Sat 3–5pm; Mon–Fri by appointment Ⓣ910 60-11 204; free), completed in 1907 by Otto Wagner as a chapel for the city's main psychiatric hospital. The church is topped by a giant copper dome and lantern like the Karlskirche and occupies a fantastic site on the commanding heights of the Baumgartner Höhe; to get there, take bus #47A from Unter-St-Veit U-Bahn. The focus of the ornate interior is very much on the main altar, with its

▲ Kirche am Steinhof

eye-catching, cage-like gilt baldachin, against a backdrop mosaic featuring St Leopold and sundry other saints. Note that at 3pm, there's a **guided tour** – more of a dull monologue really – in German only (€4), but from 4pm you're free to wander around. Close by, below the church in Pavillon V, there's now a permanent exhibition commemorating those who suffered here during the war due to the hospital's shocking involvement in the **Nazi euthanasia** campaign (Wed–Fri 10am–noon & 1–5pm or by appointment Ⓣ228 94 69-319; free; Ⓦwww.gedenkstaettesteinhof.at).

Karl-Marx-Hof

If there is one housing complex that has come to symbolize the interwar municipal socialism of "Red Vienna", it is the **Karl-Marx-Hof**, the kilometre-long, peach-and-salmon-coloured "people's palace", whose distinctive giant archways greet you as you exit from Heiligenstadt U-Bahn, in the city's northern suburbs. Though right-wing critics charged that these housing complexes were built as fortresses by the socialists to protect their workers in case of civil war, their fragility was proved on February 12, 1934, when the World War I artillery of the Austro-fascist government reduced much of the Karl-Marx-Hof to rubble in a few hours. It took another four days for the government forces to flush the last defenders out, however. This is only the most famous of the battles of the civil war, which began in Linz, and was fought just as keenly and bloodily in numerous other working-class housing estates in Vienna and other Austrian cities.

Beethoven Wohnung Heiligenstadt

Beethoven moved out to Probusgasse 6, now the **Beethoven Wohnung Heiligenstadt** (Tues–Sun 10am–1pm & 2–6pm; €2; Ⓦ www.wienmuseum.at), in 1802, on the advice of his doctor, who hoped the country air would improve his hearing. It was here he wrote his "Heiligenstadt Testament" – a facsimile of which is at the museum – addressed but never sent to his brothers. In it he talks honestly about his deafness – "a sense which in me should be more perfectly developed than in other people" – and the pain and embarrassment it brought him. Despite his personal distress, while resident at Probusgasse Beethoven completed his joyful *Second Symphony*, "brought home right from the meadows of Heiligenstadt, so full is it of summer air and summer flowers". The house in Probusgasse is one of the best preserved of all Beethoven's many residences; the museum, on the far side of the-shady, cobbled courtyard, occupies the rooms rented by Beethoven, and contains a lock of the composer's hair and his death mask. To reach the museum, take bus #38A to Armbrustergasse from U-Bahn Heiligenstadt, or walk five minutes from the tram #37 terminus.

Wienerwald

The forested hills of the **Wienerwald** (Vienna Woods) stretch from the north-western tip of the city limits to the foothills of the Alps, away to the southwest – few other capitals can boast such an impressive green belt on their doorstep. In the eighteenth century, wealthier folk came to the villages on the vine-clad slopes of the Wienerwald for the summer. The arrival of public transport meant everyone could hop on a tram to the end of the line, and enjoy a day in the countryside and today, the Wienerwald remains a popular weekend jaunt, with the summer wine gardens of the local *Heurigen* (see p.140) filled with tour groups and the Viennese themselves, here to sample the new wine.

The most popular place from which to admire the view over Vienna is **Kahlenberg** (484m), the higher of the two hills that rise to the north of the city. There's a café, with a magnificent terrace and a viewing platform, though the whole place is mobbed at weekends. According to tradition, this was where Polish King Jan Sobieski celebrated mass in 1683, before leading the army down the mountain to relieve the city from the Turks. Tradition notwithstanding, it has been proved fairly conclusively that the aforementioned mass actually took place on the neighbouring peak of **Leopoldsberg** (425m), just over 1km by road east of Kahlenberg. This is certainly a more beguiling spot in which to

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Born in Bonn, **Ludwig van Beethoven** came to Vienna in 1787, aged 17, but remained for just a few months due to his mother's illness. Her death, and his father's subsequent death from alcoholism in 1792, freed Beethoven to return to the Austrian capital, where he lived until his own demise in 1827. Like Mozart, who was fourteen years his senior, he was taught by his father, a singer in the Hofkapelle, and played piano in public at a very early age (though his father used to pretend he was two years younger than he actually was). Again like Mozart, Beethoven was a virtuoso pianist, yet their techniques couldn't have been more different: Mozart gliding over the keys with smooth fluency, Beethoven raising his hands above his head, and smashing the keys with such force that he regularly broke the strings. Unlike both Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven was never a slave to the aristocracy, but an independent artist, whose patrons clubbed together to pay him an annuity just to keep him in Vienna, and prevent him having to take up the post of *Kapellmeister* at Westphalia which was offered him in 1809.

Though recognized as a genius by Viennese high society, he was also regarded as something of a freak: unprepossessing, scruffily dressed, reeking of body odour and swearing like a trooper. Despite such shortcomings, he was clearly attractive to women, and was, in his own words, "generally involved in one entanglement or the other". However, while the names of the women he was involved with are well known, no one can be sure that his love was ever consummated or even fully reciprocated. The objects of his affections were almost invariably young, beautiful, educated, aristocratic, and occasionally even married – in other words, unobtainable. One theory put forward as to why Beethoven never married is that he had syphilis, hence why he frequently changed doctors, and talked in his letters of "a malady which I cannot change and which brings me gradually nearer to death" – some suggest it may even have been the cause of his deafness.

In 1815, Beethoven's brother, Karl, died at the age of just 41. Beethoven then made the fateful decision to adopt his nephew, also named Karl, no doubt hoping that he would be the son the composer never had. After a long drawn-out custody battle with his sister-in-law, Beethoven succeeded in removing the boy from his mother in 1820, only to send him to boarding school. Beethoven proved totally unsuitable as a father, and Karl's misery reached such a pitch that in 1826 the 15-year-old tried unsuccessfully to shoot himself. He was immediately removed from Beethoven's care, at which the composer fell into despair, eventually dying of pneumonia in March 1827. His funeral, in contrast to Mozart's, attracted a crowd of 20,000 to the Trinity Church of the Minorites on Alserstrasse, with Austria's chief poet, Franz Grillparzer, composing the funeral oration. He was buried in Währinger Friedhof, but now rests in the Zentralfriedhof (see p.131).

relax and enjoy the view. There's a much more pleasant courtyard and café, shaded by pine trees, and a more dramatic view from the restored ramparts, built by the Babenbergs in 1135.

There are several ways of **approaching the Wienerwald**. Tram #38 from Schottenring or Nussdorferstrasse deposits you in the centre of Grinzing. If you walk up Cobenzlgasse, turn right up Krapfenwaldgasse and then straight on at the crossroads, up Mukenthalerweg, you'll find yourself on the right path to Kahlenberg. To avoid the worst of the crowds and the traffic, it's better to start walking from the terminus of tram D in Nussdorf, following Beethovengang past the Beethoven memorial, then up Kahlenberger Strasse. Either way, it's a good 3km uphill to Kahlenberg itself. Alternatively, bus #38A from Heiligenstadt U-Bahn will take you all the way to Kahlenberg, Cobenzl and (less frequently) Leopoldsberg.

Prater

The only good reason to venture onto the eastern bank of the Danube Canal is to visit the **Prater** (derived from the Spanish *prado*). This large, flat tract of wooded parkland, taking up almost half of the island formed by the various arms of the Danube, first opened to the public in 1766 by Josef II and includes a host of attractions from the country's chief football stadium to the city's famous giant Ferris wheel, or Riesenrad.

By far the busiest section of the Prater is the northwest end, where you'll find the park's permanent funfair, known as the **Volksprater** (mid-March to Oct daily 10am–1am; free; Ⓦwww.prater.at). Tourists flock here for the Riesenrad, but the Viennese come here for the other rides too, a strange mix of high-tech white-knuckle affairs and more traditional ghost trains and dodgems. Taking a ride on the **Riesenrad** (daily: Jan, Feb, Nov & Dec 10am–7.45pm; March, April & Oct 10am–9.45pm; May–Sept 9am–11.45pm; Nov–Feb 10am–6pm; €8; Ⓦwww.wienerriesenrad.com), the rickety old Ferris wheel built in 1898 by the British military engineer Walter Basset, is one of those things you simply have to do if you go to Vienna.

The nearest U-Bahn for the Volksprater is Messe Prater or Praterstern (Wien-Nord station), the terminus for tram #5 and O, and a stop on tram #21. There are several more U-Bahn stations throughout the park and tram N from U-Bahn Schwedenplatz has its terminus right by the Hauptallee, a third of the way down from the Ferris wheel. Getting around the Prater, you can walk, jog, rollerblade, cycle, take a Fiaker, or rent one of the pedal carriages that seat two adults (plus two kids if you wish). Another possibility is to buy a one-way ticket on the miniature railway or **Liliputbahn** (March–Oct), which will get you almost halfway down the Hauptallee.

Johann-Strauss-Wohnung

Fans of the "Waltz King" might like to head for the **Johann-Strauss-Wohnung** (Tues–Thurs 2–6pm, Fri–Sun 10am–1pm; €2), on the first floor of Praterstr 54 (U-Bahn Nestroyplatz), where the composer lived from 1863 until the death of his first wife, the singer Jetty Treffz, in 1878. In contrast to most of the city's musical museums, some attempt has been made here to re-create a period interior: one room, decorated with ceiling panels of cherubs, contains his grand piano, house organ and standing desk at which he used to compose. There's also a fascinating collection of ephemera from the balls of the day, with various gimmicky dance cards – one laid out in the form of a staircase – and quirky ball pendants, which were kept as a sort of memento of the evening.

Zentralfriedhof

In a city where some people still keep a separate savings account in order to ensure an appropriately lavish funeral, it comes as little surprise that Vienna's chief cemetery, the **Zentralfriedhof** (daily: March, April, Sept & Oct 7am–6pm; May–Aug 7am–7pm; Nov–Feb 8am–5pm), is one of the biggest in Europe. Larger than the entire Innere Stadt, and with a much greater population – 2.5 million – than the whole of the city, it even has its own bus service to help mourners get about. Opened in 1874, at the height of Viennese funereal fetishism – when having *eine schöne Leich* ("a beautiful corpse") was something to aspire to – it's still very much a working graveyard. It's particularly busy on Sundays and on religious holidays, most notably All Saints' Day (November 1), when up to a million Viennese make the trip out here and leave candles burning in remembrance on

The Strauss Family

Of all the many tunes associated with Vienna, perhaps the best known are the waltzes composed by the Strausses. Born in Vienna to a Jewish innkeeper in Leopoldstadt, **Johann Strauss the Elder** (1804–49) kept quiet about his origins, though it was the Nazis themselves who felt the need to falsify the parish register of Vienna's Stephansdom, in order to make the Strauss family appear as true Aryans. Strauss began his career serenading diners in Viennese restaurants, along with the likes of Josef Lanner, who was to become his chief musical rival. However, it was in the dance hall of *Zum Sperl* in Leopoldstadt that Strauss the Elder made his name as a band leader, conducting a mixture of dances, orchestral phantasies and more serious music. His gypsy-like features and wild, vigorous conducting style soon became very popular in Vienna and he and his orchestra eventually achieved a modicum of fame touring Europe, with him being appointed k.k. Hofballmusikdirektor (Imperial-Royal Director of Music for Balls). However, Strauss's touring took its toll on domestic life, and he created a public scandal in 1842 when he left the family home and moved in with a young seamstress, who bore him several illegitimate children.

His eldest son, **Johann Strauss the Younger** (1825–99), followed in his footsteps, writing his first waltz at the age of 6, though much against his father's wishes (he wanted him to be a banker). It was, in fact, Johann's long-suffering mother, Anna, who directed her sons into musical careers. Father and son soon became rivals, both musically and politically. In 1848, while the Elder was busy conducting his famous *Radetzky March*, the signature tune of the *ancien régime*, the Younger was composing stirring tunes such as the *Revolution March* and the *Song of the Barricades*. Fourteen years after his father's death, Strauss the Younger was appointed k.k. Hofballmusikdirektor in 1863, rapidly surpassing even his father's enormous fame. He was one of the world's first international celebrities, feted on both sides of the Atlantic. On one memorable occasion in Boston in the US, he conducted *The Blue Danube* with 20,000 singers, an orchestra of over 1000 and 20 assistant conductors, to an audience of more than 100,000. Johann's operetta, *Die Fledermaus*, written to take Viennese minds off the economic crash of 1873, was another huge success – by the end of the decade, it was playing in some 170 theatres.

Despite his acclaim, Johann, a difficult character like his father, was something of an outsider. He was also constantly irked by his lack of recognition among serious musical critics, and his several attempts at straight opera flopped. Again like his father, he caused a scandal, divorcing his second wife, Lili, in order to marry his mistress Adele. As the Vatican would not annul his marriage, he was forced to convert to Lutheranism and become a citizen of Saxony, though he continued to live in Vienna until his death in 1899.

virtually every grave. To get there, take tram #6 or #71 from U-Bahn Simmering and get out at the monumental Jugendstil Zweite Tor (2. Tor).

Most of the so-called **Ehrengräber** (Tombs of Honour) are in Gruppe 32A, to the left, as you approach the central Jugendstil church. Centre stage is a memorial to Mozart, though he was buried in St Marxer Friedhof (see p.78). At a respectful distance lie the graves of Beethoven and Schubert, who were disinterred from Währinger Friedhof in 1889 and reburied here. Other composers to look out for include **Christoph Willibald Gluck**, **Johannes Brahms**, **Hugo Wolf** and the entire **Strauss** clan. The sunken roundabout in front of the main church is the illustrious **Prezidentsgruft**, containing the remains of the presidents of the Second Republic. Close by, in Gruppe 32C, you'll find more intriguing incumbents like the composer **Arnold Schönberg**, and his mentor **Alexander Zemlinsky**, both of whom died in exile in the USA.

Eating and drinking

Like nowhere else in Austria, Vienna has a huge variety of places **to eat**, most of them taking great care over the preparation and presentation of their food. The **Beisl** (Yiddish for "little house") is the city's chief traditional eating and drinking establishment, a sort of unpretentious, muzak-free, wood-panelled inn, where you're expected to share a table with other customers. In addition, the city's culinary range allows you to sample cuisines from all over the globe, from the Balkans to Japan.

Vienna is, of course, also spiritual home of the **café** or Kaffeehaus, and has by far the largest selection in the country. While the rest of the world queues up for fast food, the Viennese Kaffeehaus implores you to slow down; as the sign in one such café says, "sorry, we do not cater for people in a hurry." For the price of a small coffee, you can sit for as long as you like without being asked to move on or buy another drink. Understandably, then, the price of this first drink is fairly steep and will regularly set you back around €2.50–3.50.

For combining an out-of-the-city trip with some great food in a welcoming atmosphere, head off to one of the simple **Heurigen** in the wine-making suburbs.

Cafés

The Viennese take their **cafés** seriously – on average they drink twice as much coffee as beer – and the capital's Kaffeehäuser are by no means a uniform bunch. As well as the traditional Kaffeehaus – the smoky type, with a wide range of newspapers to read, and a waiter in a tuxedo – there's also the Kaffee-Konditorei, where the coffee is a mere sideshow to the establishment's cakes and pastries. Many Kaffeehäuser serve hot food all day long, with the best choice of dishes at lunchtime. In addition, there are also new modern variants on the old Kaffeehaus which eschew the tuxedos, heavy Viennese cooking and Torten, and consequently attract a younger crowd.

Innere Stadt

Alt Wien 1, Bäckerstr 9; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Bohemian Kaffeehaus with *Beisl* decor, posters on nicotine-stained walls, and a dark, smoky atmosphere even on the sunniest day. Daily 10am–2am.

Café Bräunerhof 1, Stallburggasse 2; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Thomas Bernhard's favourite has a real Kaffeehaus atmosphere: nicotine-coloured walls, slightly snooty tuxedoed waiters and decent food, too. Mon–Fri 8am–9pm, Sat 8am–7pm, Sun 10am–7pm.

Café Central 1, Herrengasse 14 Ⓦ www.ferstel.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. The most famous of all Viennese cafés, resurrected in the 1980s and still the most architecturally interesting. Trotsky was once a regular. Mon–Sat 7.30am–10pm, Sun 10am–10pm. Piano music daily 5–10pm.

Demel 1, Kohlmarkt 14 Ⓦ www.demel.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. The king of the Kaffee-Konditorei – and one of the priciest where the cake display is a work of art, and so is the interior. Daily 10am–7pm.

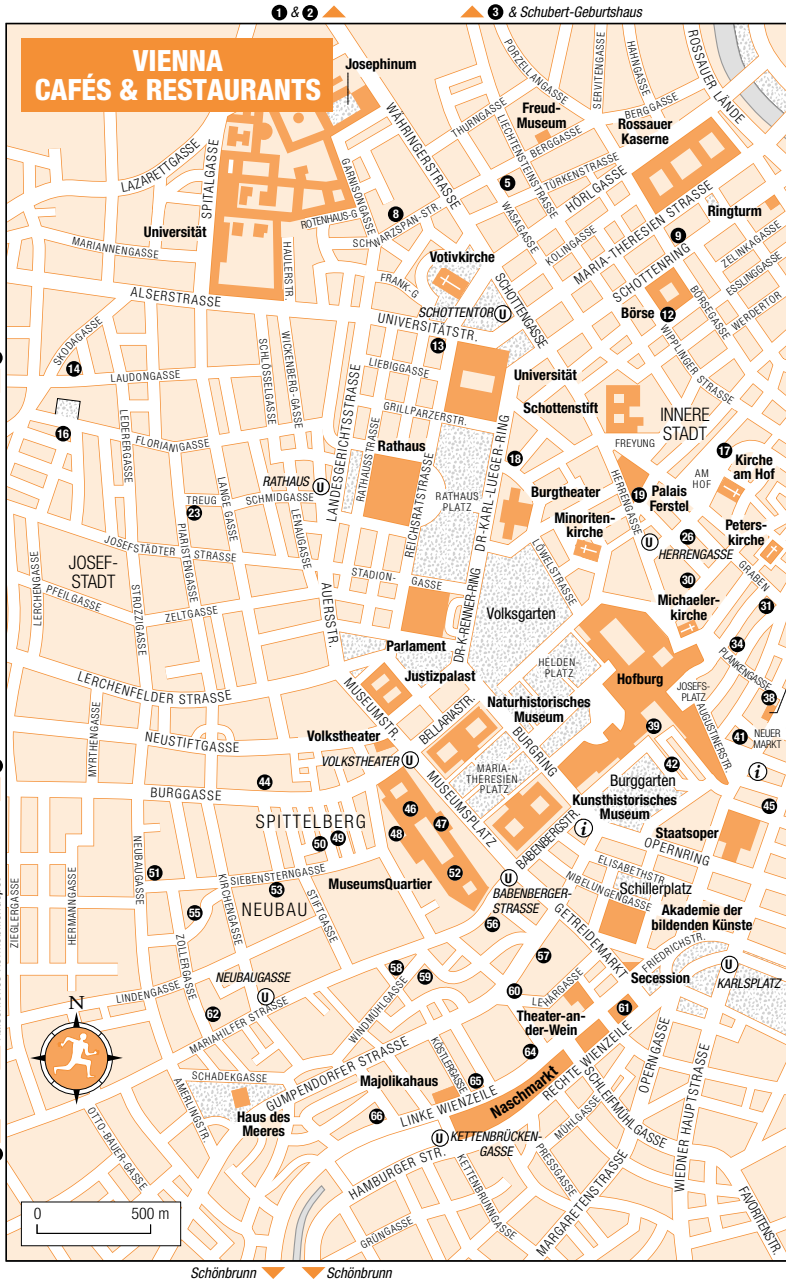
Café Engländer 1, Postgasse 2 Ⓦ www.café-englaender.com; U-Bahn Stubentor. Great Kaffeehaus with a very long pedigree, currently sporting a smart modernist look and serving good food. Mon–Sat 8am–1am, Sun 10am–1am.

Café Frauenhuber 1, Himmelpfortgasse 6; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. One of the oldest Kaffeehäuser in Vienna – Beethoven was a frequent visitor – with vaulted ceiling, deep burgundy upholstery and an excellent menu. Mon–Sat 8am–11pm.

Café Hawelka 1, Dorotheergasse 6; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Small, smoky bohemian café run for sixty years by the same couple until Josefine Hawelka died in 2005; Leoopold still works on and you may have to fight for a table. Mon & Wed–Sat 8am–2am, Sun 4pm–2am.

Kleines Café 1, Franziskanerplatz 3; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Cosy little café, an early crossover between traditional Kaffeehaus and modern bar, designed by the Viennese architect Hermann Czech in the 1970s. Mon–Sat 10am–2am, Sun 1pm–2am.

Café Markusplatz 1, Tuchlauben 16 Ⓦ www.markusplatz.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Slip into



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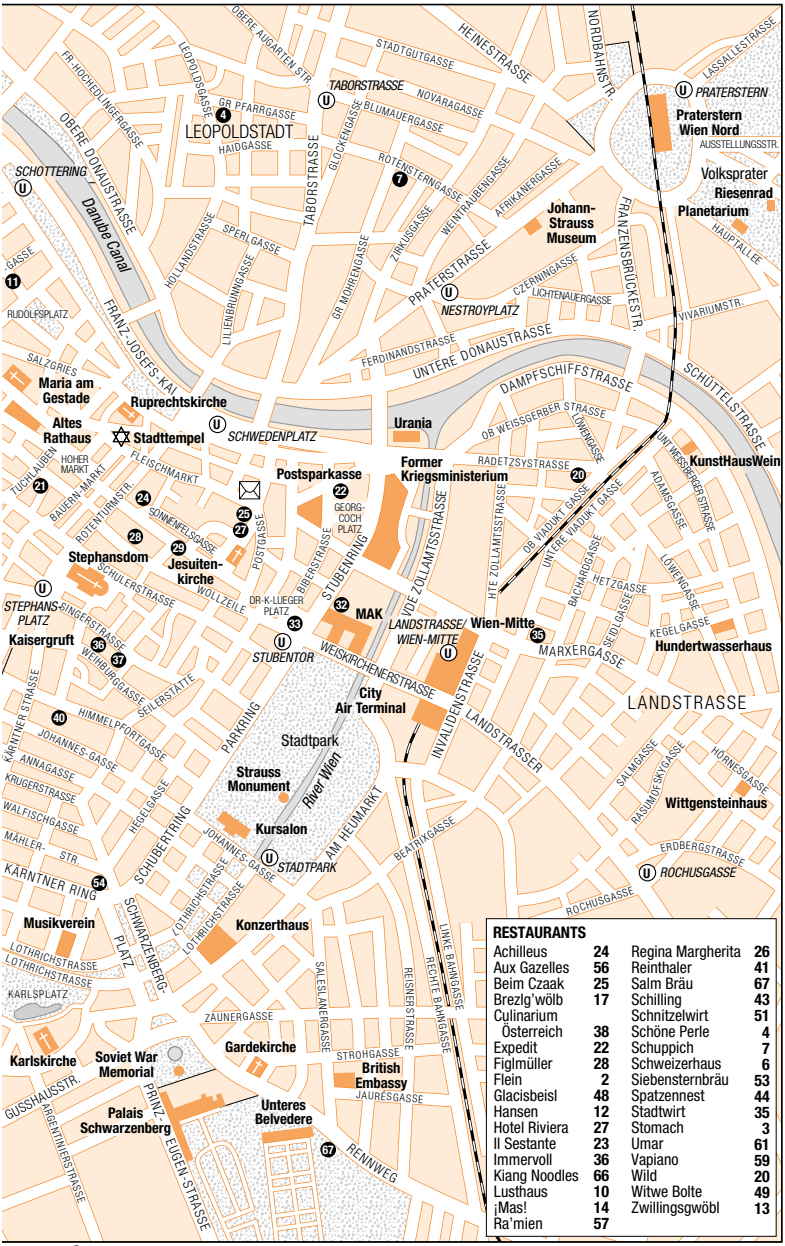
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Danube Canal
Maria am Gestade
Ruprechtskirche
Altes Rathaus
Stadttempel
SCHWEDENPLATZ
Urania
Former Kriegsministerium
Postsparkasse
Stephansdom
Jesuitenkirche
STEPHANSPLATZ
Kaisergruft
STUBENTOR
MAK
LANDSTRASSE/WIEN-MITTE
Wien-Mitte
Hundertwasserhaus
KunstHausWien
LANDSTRASSE
City Air Terminal
Stadtpark
River Wien
Strauss Monument
Kursalon
STADTPARK
Konzerthaus
Musikverein
Karlskirche
Soviet War Memorial
Palais Schwarzenberg
Gardekirche
British Embassy
Unteres Belvedere
Oberes Belvedere
Bosch
Wittgensteinhaus
ROCHUSGASSE
Praterstern
Praterstern Wien Nord
Volksprater
Riesenrad
Planetarium
Johann-Strauss Museum
NESTROYPLATZ
TABORSTRASSE
PRATERSTRASSE
UNTERE DONAUSTRASSE
DAMPFSCHIFFSTRASSE
SCHOTTENRING
KARNTNER RING
RENNWEG
HEINESTRASSE
NORDBAHNSTR.
SCHUTTELSTRASSE
INVALIDENSTRASSE
MARXERGASSE
AM HEUMARKT
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one of the retro 1950s booths at the resurrected *Café Tuchlauben* and enjoy great coffee, patisseries, food and Wi-Fi. Mon–Fri 7.30am–7pm, Sat 8.30am–7pm.

Ringstrasse

Kantina 7, Museumsplatz 1; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. Simple, relaxed café near the MuseumsQuartier bookshop, with emerald green furniture, and a simple snacky menu of breakfasts, pitta sandwiches and salads. Mon–Wed & Sun 10am–midnight, Thurs–Sat 10am–2am.

Café Landtmann 1, Dr-Karl-Lueger-Ring 4 Ⓦwww.landtmann.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse/Schottentor. One of the poshest of the Kaffeehäuser – and a favourite with Freud – with impeccably attired waiters, and a high quota of politicians and Burgtheater actors. Live music Sun 8–11pm. Daily 7.30am–midnight.

Café Leopold 7, Museumsplatz 1 Ⓦwww.café-leopold.at; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. Stylish modernist Leopold Museum café, with a summer terrace overlooking the courtyard. Sink into the beige and black leatherette armchairs inside and tuck into the tasty pasta and veggie dishes for under €8. Daily 10am–2am, Fri & Sat until 4am. DJs after 10pm.

Österreicher im MAK 1, Stubenring 5 Ⓦwww.oesterreicherimmak.at; U-Bahn Stubentor. This museum café, with its wonderfully high nineteenth-century coffered ceiling, has been given a modernist redesign by Eichinger oder Knechtl, and, like the MAK itself (see p.111), is a trendy little spot. The food is delicious and comes courtesy of one of the city's top chefs. Daily 8.30am–1am.

Café Palmenhaus 1, Burggarten Ⓦwww.palmenhaus.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Stylish modern café set amidst the palms of the greenhouse in the Burggarten. Breakfasts are great and the daily menu specializes in grilled fish and meats. A wonderful treat after visiting the Hofburg. Daily 10am–2am; Jan & Feb closed Mon & Tues. DJs Fri from 9pm.

Café Prückel 1, Stubenring 24; U-Bahn Stubentor. The *Prückel* has lost two-thirds of its original interior, but the retro 1950s refurbishment has given it a new lease of life, and draws in a great mix of young things, elderly shoppers and dog-owners from the nearby Stadtpark. Daily 8.30am–10pm. Piano music Mon, Wed & Fri 7–10pm.

Café Sacher 1, Philharmonikerstr 4; Ⓦwww.sacher.com; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. For all its fame, the *Sacher* is a bit of a let-down. The decor is imperial red and gold, but the *Sachertorte* overrated – practically the only folk who come here nowadays are tourists. Daily 8am–midnight.

Café Schottenring 1, Schottenring Ⓦwww.café-schottenring.at; U-Bahn Schottentor/Schottenring. Situated on the corner of Börsegasse, this L-shaped 1879 Kaffeehaus, with its high stuccoed ceiling, is an oasis of calm on the Ringstrasse. Mon–Fri 6.30am–11pm, Sat & Sun 8am–9pm. Live piano daily 3–7pm.

Cheap eats

The best place to grab a quick bite and **eat cheaply** at the same time is the Naschmarkt, Vienna's premier fruit and vegetable market (Mon–Sat), where you can feast on seafood, kebabs, felafel, burek, noodles and much more besides, or assemble a king-sized picnic. As well as the student *Mensen*, there are plenty of other self-service places, such as *Naschmarkt* – not to be confused with the aforementioned market of the same name – 1, Schottengasse 1 (U-Bahn Schottentor), with branches all over the city. More specialized, but equally reliable self-service chains include the fish and seafoody *Nordsee*, 1, Kärntnerstr 25 (U-Bahn Stephansplatz), the Middle Eastern *Levante*, 1, Wollzeile 19 (U-Bahn Stephansplatz), and the *Schnitzelhaus*, 1, Krugerstr 6 (U-Bahn Karlsplatz), again, each with numerous other branches.

Smarter, more congenial stand-up options include *Trzesniewski*, the minimalist *Brötchen* bar, at Dorotheergasse 1 (U-Bahn Stephansplatz), that is a veritable Viennese institution. *Zum schwarzen Kameel*, Bognergasse 5 (U-Bahn Herrengasse), is a terribly smart, convivial deli with stand-up tables only. *Wrenkh Natürlich* is a small weekday-only veggie snack bar at Rauhensteingasse 12 (U-Bahn Stephansplatz), round the back of the *Steffl* department store on Kärntnerstrasse, while *Meinl am Graben*, on the corner of Kohlmarkt and Graben (U-Bahn Stephansplatz), has a seafood bar and a stand-up eatery. *Bizi*, Rotenturmstr 4 (U-Bahn Stephansplatz), is a reliable, functional place offering pizza, salads and roasted main dishes. Lastly, there's a conveniently central Billa supermarket just down Singerstrasse from Stephansplatz.

Café Schwarzenberg 1, Kartner Ring 17. Opulent café with rich marble, ceramic and wood-panelled decor, plus huge mirrors and a great cake-cabinet. Super snooty waiters can make this place a bit of an ordeal. Mon–Fri & Sun 7am–midnight, Sat 9am–midnight. Live piano music Wed & Fri 7.30–11pm, Sat & Sun 5–7pm.

Soho 1, Burggarten; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Cut above your average student canteen, this is the Nationalbibliothek's groovy café near the Palmenhaus, with a daily lunchtime menu for under €5; pay for the food at the bar and go hand your counter in at the kitchen. Mon–Fri 9am–4pm.

Una 7, Museumsplatz 1; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. Probably the best of the MuseumsQuartier cafés, *Una* boasts a wonderful vaulted floral ceramic ceiling, an imaginative menu and a friendly vibe. Mon–Fri 9am–midnight, Sat 10am–midnight, Sun 10am–6pm.

Vorstädte and suburbs

Café Berg 9, Berggasse 8; U-Bahn Schottentor. Relaxed modern mixed gay/straight café, attached to the city's chief gay bookshop, with great breakfasts, light lunches and main meals. Daily 10am–1am.

Café Dommayer 13, Dommayergasse 1 Ⓦ www.dommayer.at; U-Bahn Hietzing. Historic Kaffeehaus where Johann Strauss Junior made his premiere. Tuxedoed waiters, comfy alcoves, occasional live music and lots of coffee and cakes. A good rest stop after a hard day at Schönbrunn. Daily 7am–10pm. Live Strauss Sat 2–4pm.

Café Drechsler 6, Linke Wienzeile 22 Ⓦ www.cafedrechsler.at; U-Bahn Kettenbrückengasse; see map, pp.134–135. Terence Conran has given what was a scruffy Kaffeehaus by the Naschmarkt a minimalist makeover, and it's as popular as ever, especially with clubbers attracted by the early opening hours. Mon 8am–2am, Tues–Sat 8am–2am, Sun 3am–midnight.

Café Europa 7, Zollergasse 8 Ⓦ www.hinterzimmer.at; U-Bahn Neubaugasse. Lively, spacious café that attracts a trendy crowd who love the posey window booths. Food is a tasty mixture of Viennese and Italian. DJ nights in the Hinterzimmer (back room) from 10pm. Daily 9am–4am.

Café Florianihof 8, Florianigasse 45 Ⓦ www.florianihof.at; U-Bahn Josefstädter Str. Pared-down old neighbourhood Kaffeehaus that has retained one or two Jugendstil touches, and yet has a light and airy, modern feel. Mon–Fri 8am–midnight, Sat & Sun 10am–8pm.

Café Goldegg 4, Argentinerstr 49; U-Bahn Südtiroler Platz. *Echt*, no nonsense Kaffeehaus just a short stroll from the Belvedere in the backstreets of Wieden. Mon–Fri 8am–10pm, Sat 8am–1pm.

Café Kafka 6, Capistrangasse 8; U-Bahn Museumsquartier; see map, pp.134–135. Old, smokey Kaffeehaus near the MuseumsQuartier that's home (once a month) to Vienna's English poetry group, and serves up veggie and vegan dishes. Daily 8am–midnight.

St Josef 7, Mondscheingasse 10 Ⓣ 524 68 18; tram #49; see map, pp.134–135. Functional, but friendly self-service café (with shop at back) serving tasty veggie dishes for under €10. No smoking. Mon–Fri 9am–6.30pm, Sat 9am–4pm.

Café Savoy 6, Linke Wienzeile 36; U-Bahn Kettenbrückengasse. Wonderfully louche, camp fin-de-siècle decor, and a gay café for most of the week, but packed with bohemian bargain-hunters during the Sat flea market. Mon–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 9am–2am.

Sperl 6, Gumpendorfer Str 11 Ⓦ www.cafesperl.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz /Babenbergerstr. Just off Mariahilferstr, this is one of the classics of the Kaffeehaus scene, with billiard tables and a hint of elegant bohemian shabbiness. Mon–Sat 7am–11pm, Sun 11am–8pm (July & Aug closed Sun).

Statt-Beisl im WUK 9, Währingerstr 59 Ⓦ www.wuk.at; tram #40, #41 or #42. Regular café-bar in the WUK cultural complex (to left as you enter), offering lots of inexpensive veggie and vegan dishes. Mon–Fri 11am–2am, Sat & Sun 5pm–2am.

Weltcafé 9, Schwarzspanierstr 15 Ⓦ www.weltcafe.at; U-Bahn Schottentor. Very popular fair-trade student café with shocking red rag-rolled walls, poufs and sofas to collapse in and cheap food. Daily 9am–2am.

Café Westend 7, Mariahilferstr 128; U-Bahn Westbahnhof. Conveniently located directly opposite Westbahnhof, the faded grandeur of this traditional Kaffeehaus – once frequented by Hitler – is the best possible introduction to Vienna for those who've just arrived by train. Daily 7am–midnight.

Inexpensive and mid-range restaurants

Hungry visitors can have a difficult time trying to find somewhere decent in the immediate vicinity of popular areas such as Stephansplatz, the Hofburg, Karlsplatz and the Belvedere. The MuseumsQuartier has a good choice of restaurants, and there are further opetions dispersed more widely throughout the surrounding district of **Neubau**, and neighbouring **Josefstadt**.

Prices are slightly lower in a *Beisl* – or city pub – with lunchtime specials for around €8. In more formal restaurants, prices for main dishes hover around €8–12. Phone numbers have been given only for those restaurants where it's advisable to **book a table**.

Innere Stadt

Achilleus 1, Köllnerhofgasse 3; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Austrian-looking restaurant that serves excellent Greek food. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight, Sun 11am–4pm.

Beim Czaak 1, Postgasse 15 Ⓣ513 72 15; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Lovely dark-green wood panelling and low-lighting gives this well-established *Beisl* a cosy but smart feel. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight.

Brezlg'wölb 1, Ledererhof 9; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Wonderful candlelit cave-like restaurant with deliberately olde worlde decor. Hidden in a cobbled street off Drahtgasse, it serves the usual Austrian favourites at knock-down prices. Daily 11.30am–1am.

Culinarium Österreich 1, Neuer Markt 10–11; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Very swanky deli, with an inexpensive midday menu on the ground floor, plus a more formal first-floor restaurant specializing in Austrian cuisine. Mon–Sat 11.30am–midnight.

Expedit 1, Weisingerstr 6; Ⓣ512 33 13; U-Bahn Stubentor. Bar, deli and cantina all rolled into one, this converted warehouse attracts a youthful crowd, who tuck into the antipasti and Ligurian specialities with gusto. Don't forget to check out the indoor *boccia*, an Italian version of boules in the basement (€5 for half an hour). Mon–Fri noon–midnight, Sat 6pm–midnight

Figlmüller 1, Wollzeile 5, Ⓦ www.figlmueller.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Branch nearby at 1, Bäckerstr 6 (closed July) and out at 19, Grinzinger Str 55; tram #38. It's in every tourist guide to the city there is, but this is still the place to eat Wiener Schnitzel, with a traditional potato salad, washed down with wine (there's no beer). Daily 11am–10.30pm. Closed Aug.

Hotel Riviera 1, Schönlaterngasse 13 Ⓣ907 61 49, Ⓦ www.lametta.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Creamy white Italian restaurant, with a lovely summer terrace, that brings a slice of stylish Med cuisine to the backstreets of Vienna. Mon–Fri 11am–midnight.

Immervoll 1, Weihburggasse 17 Ⓣ513 52 88; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Small, but very popular lime- and pastel-green wood-panelled neo-*Beisl* designed by Hermann Czech, offering a small, but excellent Viennese menu. Daily noon–midnight.

Regina Margherita 1, Wallnerstr 4 Ⓣ533 08 12, Ⓦ www.barbaro.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Smart, bustling Neapolitan pizza and pasta joint in the inner court of the Palais Esterházy. Pizzas are cooked in a stupendous lava oven, and you can eat alfresco in the summer. Mon–Sat noon–3pm & 6pm–midnight.

Reinthaler 1, Gluckgasse 5; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Dive down the steps to this genuine, no-nonsense Viennese *Beisl* that's busy with locals. No concessions to modern cooking (and none to veggies). Mon–Fri 9am–11pm.

Ringstrasse

Glacisbeisl 7, Museumsplatz 1 Ⓦ www.glacisbeisl.at; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Hidden in the entrails of the MuseumsQuartier, *Glacisbeisl* has had a stark modern makeover; the food is even better and the summer terrace as wonderful as ever – be warned, though, it's very popular. Daily 11am–2am.

Hansen 1, Wipplingerstr 34 Ⓦ www.hansen.co.at; U-Bahn Schottentor. Attractive, smart restaurant located in the flower and gardening shop in the basement of the city's splendid former stock exchange. Mon–Fri 9am–9pm, Sat 9am–5pm.

Zwillingsgwöbl 1, Universitätsstr 5; U-Bahn Schottentor. Popular, unpretentious, smoky student *Beisl*, just down from the university. Mon–Fri 9am–1am, Sat 10am–1am.

Landstrasse & Naschmarkt

Kiang Noodles 6, Joanelligasse 3; Ⓦ www.kiang.at; U-Bahn Kettenbrückengasse, plus numerous branches. *Wagamama*-style designer noodles restaurant chain. All branches feature minimal, modernist decor, efficient service and freshly prepared dishes. Mon–Sat 6pm–midnight.

Salm Bräu 3, Rennweg 8. Conveniently located beer hall, which brews its own beer in an old monastic wine cellar, and serves filling pub food, right outside the Unteres Belvedere. Daily 11am–midnight.

Stadtwirt 3, Untere Viaduktgasse 45 Ⓣ713 38 28 Ⓦ www.stadtwirt.at; U-Bahn Wien-Mitte; see map, pp.134–135. Large, classic, wood-panelled family-run *Beisl*; the food is traditional Viennese, the wine sourced from their own vineyard. Mon–Fri 10am–midnight, Sat 4pm–1am, Sun 11am–4pm.

Umar 4, Naschmarkt Stand 76–79; U-Bahn Karlsplatz; see map, pp.134–135. Fish restaurant run by Naschmarkt fishmonger; the stuff is as fresh as it gets in landlocked Vienna, and it's simply prepared. Mon–Sat 11.30am–11pm.

Wild 3, Radetzkyplatz 1; tram #N from U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Stylish refurbished *Beisl* with lots of traditional dishes on the menu as well as more modern fare. Daily 11.30am–11pm.

Mariahilf & Neubau

Aux Gazelles 6, Rahlgasse 5 Ⓣ585 66 45, Ⓦwww.auxgazelles.at; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. The full over-the-top North African monty, this converted brick factory houses a café & deli, caviar & oyster bar, salon de thé, a club bar and even a small *hammam*. Mon–Sat 11am–2am.

Ra'mien 6, Gumpendorfer Str 9; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. Very popular, clubby, designer noodle restaurant with a late-night bar (open until the early hours) attached. Tues–Sun 11am–midnight.

Schilling 7, Burggasse 103, Ⓦwww.schilling-wirt.at; tram #5 or bus #48A. A modish crowd frequents this nouveau stripped-down *Beisl* on the corner of Halbgasse; the food is traditional but imaginatively presented and freshly prepared. Daily 11am–1am.

Schnitzelwirt 7, Neubaugasse 52; tram #49. Aside from *Figlmüller* (see map, pp.134–135), this is the place to eat *Wiener Schnitzel* – they're just as humungous, cheaper and served with chips. Mon–Sat 11am–10pm.

Siebensternbräu 7, Siebensterngasse 19; tram #49. Popular modern micro-brewery, serving solid Viennese pub food, with lots of pan-fried dishes served with dark rye bread. Dailly 10am–midnight.

Spatzennest 7, Ulrichsplatz 1; bus #13A or #48A. Much treasured, down-to-earth local Viennese *Beisl*, just off Burggasse. Daily except Fri & Sat 10am–midnight.

Vapiano 6, Theobaldgasse 19 Ⓦwww.vapiano.at; U-Bahn Museumsquartier; see map, pp.134–135. Bright, spacious modern self-service place with an open kitchen, where they'll make your pizza or pasta dish in front of you. Daily 11am–1am.

Witwe Bolte 7, Gutenberggasse 13; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Long-established *Wiener Beisl* in the charming backstreets of Spittelberg, famous for having been visited by Josef II incognito in the eighteenth century. Lovely summer garden. Daily 11.30am–11.30pm.

Josefstaft

Il Sestante 8, Piaristengasse 50; U-Bahn Rathaus. L-shaped Sicilian resto decked out in warm apricot colours, modern furnishings and wood panelling, serving tasty pizzas, fresh pasta and risotto. Mon–Sat 11.30am–11.30pm.

Mas 8, Laudongasse 36 Ⓣ403 83 24, Ⓦwww.restaurante-mas.at; tram #5, #43 or #44. Stylish, modern Latino joint serving filling enchiladas and tacos, washed down with a margarita. Mon–Sat 6pm–2am, Sun 10am–2am.

Die Wäscherei 8, Albertgasse 49/Laudongasse Ⓦwww.die-waescherei.at; U-Bahn Josefstädterstr; see map, pp.134–135. Funky, arty little bar with an imaginative menu, lots of veggie choices and great beers on offer. Mon–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 10am–2am, Sun 10am–midnight.

Alsergrund

Flein 9, Boltzmanngasse 2; tram #37, #38, #40, #41 & #42. Lovely inventive food, small informal setting and a perfect spot in fine weather, as the large terrace looks across Clam-Gallas Park. Mon–Fri 11am–midnight.

Stomach 9, Seegasse 26 Ⓣ310 20 99; tram D. Informal Styrian *Beisl*, with a lovely cobbled courtyard, specializing in creative beef dishes, but also catering well for veggies. Wed–Sat 4pm–midnight, Sun 10am–10pm.

Leopoldstadt

Lusthaus 2, Freudenau 254 Ⓣ728 95 65, Ⓦwww.lusthaus-wien.at; bus #77A. Eighteenth-century rotunda at the far end of Hauptallee that makes a perfect food halt while exploring the Prater. Oct–April daily noon–6pm; May–Sept Mon–Fri noon–11pm, Sat & Sun noon–6pm.

Schöne Perle 2, Leopoldsgasse/Grosser Pfarrgasse Ⓣ243 35 93, Ⓦwww.schoene-perle.at; U-Bahn Taborstr. Smart but relaxed L-shaped local neo-*Beisl* serving typical Viennese dishes made with organic produce. Daily noon–midnight.

Schuppich 2, Rotensterngasse 18 Ⓣ212 43 40, Ⓦwww.schuppich.at; U-Bahn Taborstr. A taste of Trieste (once the Habsburgs' main sea port); à la carte or a four-course menu for €25. Wed–Sat 6pm–midnight, Sun noon–4pm & 6–10pm.

Schweizerhaus 2, Str des 1 Mai 116; Ⓦwww.schweizerhaus.at; U-Bahn Praterstern. Massive Czech-owned terrace restaurant in the Prater; known for its draught beer and Czech specialities such as tripe soup and grilled pigs' trotters (*Stelzen*). Mid-March to Oct Mon–Fri 11am–11pm, Sat & Sun 10am–11pm.

Expensive restaurants

With the United Nations on its doorstep, and a good year-round calendar of conferences to cater for, it comes as no surprise that Vienna has plenty of

expensive restaurants, where you can find cuisine to match the best in the world. The following is a tiny selection of places; each one will set you back at least €60 a head.

Do & Co 1, Stephansplatz 12 ⓣ 532 03 73; ⓦ www.doco.com; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Large, loud, and extremely popular restaurant on the third floor of the Haas Haus, overlooking the Stephansdom, offering every type of cuisine from *Wiener* to sushi. Daily noon–3pm & 6pm–midnight.

Hollmann Salon 1, Grashofgasse 3 ⓣ 961 19 60 40 ⓦ www.hollmann-salon.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. A very classy (no-smoking) Viennese restaurant hidden away in the courtyard of the Heiligenkreuzhof, offering a good spread of immaculately presented meat, fish and veggie dishes. Mon–Sat 11am–10pm.

Kervansaray 1, Mahlerstr 9 ⓣ 512 88 43, ⓦ www.kervansaray.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. This is the city's top fish and seafood restaurant: on the ground floor, Turkish waiters will tell you what the specials are, while upstairs is the *Hummerbar* which specializes in lobster. Mon–Sat noon–midnight.

Meinl am Graben 1, Graben 19 ⓣ 532 33 34, ⓦ www.meinlamgraben.com; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Elegant first-floor restaurant at the flagship Harrods-like branch of *Julius Meinl*, with a view straight down Graben. The cooking here is fairly flashy for Vienna, and very good, taking its inspiration from all over. Mon–Wed 8.30am–midnight, Thurs & Fri 8am–midnight, Sat 9am–midnight.

Steirereck 1, Stadtpark ⓣ 713 31 68, ⓦ www.steirereck.at; U-Bahn Stadtpark or Stubentor. Much hyped, pricey Styrian restaurant in the Stadtpark, which also runs the charming riverside *Meierei*, serving an incredible array of cheeses and less expensive meals from 9am. Mon–Fri 11.30am–3pm & 6.30–11pm.

Vestibül 1, Dr Karl-Lueger-Ring 2 ⓣ 532 49 99, ⓦ www.vestibuel.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Buzzing restaurant in one of the ornate wings of the Burgtheater, serving up classy dishes to a moneyed crowd. Mon–Fri 11am–midnight, Sat 6pm–midnight. July & Aug closed Sat & Sun.

Vienna's Heurigen

The city's traditional **Heurigen** are located out in the wine-producing villages at the foot of the Wienerwald, that now form the outer suburbs of Vienna. Grinzing is the most famous and consequently the most touristy but there are also numerous *Heurigen* on the main street of Sandgasse, or, to avoid the worst of the crowds, head further up Cobenzlgasse. Next most popular are the nearby areas of Heiligenstadt and Nussdorf. Less touristy alternatives include Sievering and Neustift am Walde. Another option is to cross over the Danube and head for the village of Stammersdorf, and its immediate neighbour Strebersdorf.

In addition, Vienna itself boasts a handful of centrally located wine-taverns known as **Stadtheurigen**, often housed in the cellars of the city's former monasteries. These are not real *Heurigen* at all, but are still great places to drink wine and eat the simple food on offer.

Village Heurigen

Haslinger 19, Agnesgasse 3, Sievering ⓦ www.buschenschank-haslinger.at; bus #39A from U-Bahn Heiligenstadt to the terminus. *Heuriger* overlooking the rooftops of Sievering, offering warm and cold buffets, and boasting a lovely, sloping orchard garden. Tues–Fri 2pm–midnight, Sat & Sun 11.30am–midnight.

Hirt 19, Eisernenhandgasse 165, Kahlenbergerdorf. Fifteen-minute walk from S-Bahn Kahlenbergerdorf. Lovely *Heuriger* tucked into the slopes below Leopoldsberg (see p.129) overlooking the Danube. April–Oct Wed–Fri 3–11pm, Sat & Sun noon–11pm; Nov–March Fri–Sun noon–11pm.

Mayer am Pfarrplatz 19, Pfarrplatz 2, Heiligenstadt ⓦ www.mayer.pfarrplatz.at; bus #38A from U-Bahn Heiligenstadt. One of Beethoven's many addresses in Vienna, now a cosy *Heuriger*, with live *Schrammelmusik* (daily from 7pm) and a large, shady patio garden out back. Mid-Jan to mid-Dec daily 4pm–midnight, Sun 11am–midnight.

Schreiberhaus 19, Rathstr 54, Neustift am Walde ⓦ www.dasschreiberhaus.at; bus #35A from U-Bahn Nussdorfer Str. Set in the midst of Neustift's sloping vineyards, this friendly *Heuriger* is popular with parties, but is big enough to absorb them. Daily 11am–1am.

Sirbu 19, Kahlenberger Str 210, Nussdorf. Fifteen-minute walk from bus 38A terminus. Positioned in amongst the vineyards, with fabulous views from the hill above Nussdorf, and the usual self-service

buffet and local wines. April to mid-Oct Mon–Sat 3pm–midnight.

Wieninger 21, Stammersdorfer Str 78, Stammersdorf ⓦ www.heuriger-wieninger.at; tram #31 to the terminus from U-Bahn Floridsdorf. Lots of fresh light pine inside, courtyard garden outside, and above-average buffet and wine. Wed–Fri 3pm–midnight, Sat & Sun noon–midnight.

Zawodsky 19, Reinischgasse 3, Grinzing ⓦ www.zawodsky.at; tram #38. Classic, simple *Heuriger*, with benches set out in a lovely apple orchard garden with fantastic views over Vienna. mid-Feb–Dec Wed & Thurs 5pm–midnight, Fri, Sat & Sun 2pm–midnight.

Stadtheurigen

Augustinerkeller 1, Augustinerstr 1, ⓦ www.bitzinger.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Vast array of green and black striped booths in the cellars underneath the Albertina. Fast service and hearty Viennese food; a tad touristy, but fun. *Schrammelmusik* from 6.30pm. Daily 11am–midnight.

Esterházykeller 1, Haarhof 1, ⓦ www.esterhazy.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Snug, brick-vaulted wine cellar with very cheap wine and a limited range of hot and cold snacks. Situated off Naglergasse. Mon–Fri 11am–11pm, Sat & Sun 4–11pm.

Göttweiger Stiftskeller 1, Spiegelgasse 9 ⓦ www.goettweiger-stiftskeller.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Ground-floor monastic wine cellars that feel more like a family *Beisl*. Utterly traditional food and a mixed clientele – very popular, especially at lunchtime. Mon–Fri 8am–10pm.

Melker Stiftskeller 1, Schottengasse 3; U-Bahn Schottentor. Vast, high-ceilinged wine cellar owned by the famous Melk monks, serving traditional grub. Tues–Sat 5pm–midnight.

Zwölf-Apostelkeller 1, Sonnenfelsgasse 3 ⓦ www.zwoelf-apostelkeller.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. An attractive seventeenth-century building with bars housed in three levels of cellars. *The* place to drink wine, but often difficult to find a space; cold buffet only. Daily 4.30pm–midnight.

Bars, clubs and live venues

The vast majority of Viennese are safely tucked up in bed by as early as 10pm. Meanwhile, however, a hard core stay up until very early in the morning – in fact it's quite possible to keep partying round the clock. Vienna's late-night **bars** are concentrated in three main areas, the most famous of which is the so-called **Bermuda Triangle**, or *Bermuda Dreieck*, which focuses on Rabensteig, Seitenstettengasse, Ruprechtsplatz and the streets around. The emergence of the Triangle in the 1980s helped kick-start Vienna's nightlife out of its stupor, though the area has become a victim of its own success. That said, such is the variety packed into these few streets that you're bound to find somewhere that appeals.

Vienna's late-night **bars and clubs** are sprinkled throughout the city, but are concentrated in two main areas. The most interesting is around the **Naschmarkt**, where late-night licences abound, and it's easy enough to wander over into Mariahilferstrasse and Neubau to find further late-night distractions. The other main area is under the arches of the U6 U-Bahn, as it careers along the Gürtel, from Thaliastrasse northwards. In warmer weather, during term time, it's also worth checking out the courtyards of the **Universitätscampus**, off Alserstrasse – and of course, there are the outdoor bars on the Copa Cagrana on the **Donauinsel**.

Vienna's **club scene** is small for a city of 1.5 million, but dance music, and in particular, techno and electronica, remain very popular. Nevertheless, the majority of Vienna's clubs are mostly tiny affairs, little more than late-night DJ bars, which might host live bands, or, more often than not, resident DJs spinning discs (both danceable and non-danceable), while the punters simply chill out and drink. As such, it's difficult to differentiate between what's a bar, what's a club and what's a live venue, so we've simply organized the listings by area.

To find out what's on at Vienna's clubs, check out the "Party" section in the weekly listings tabloid *Falter* (see p.66). The two big annual popular music events are the **Jazz Fest Wien** (ⓦ www.viennajazz.org), an international jazz festival

that takes place in various venues around the city in late June/early July, and the **Donauinselfest** (Ⓦ www.donauinselfest.at), the SPÖ-organized free summer pop festival on the Donauinsel.

The Innere Stadt

American Bar (Loos Bar) 1, Kärntner Durchgang Ⓦ www.loosbar.at; U-Bahn Stephensplatz. The "Loos Bar" is a small, dark late-night cocktail bar off Kärntnerstrasse with a wonderfully luscious glass, marble and onyx 1908 interior by Adolf Loos. Mon–Wed & Sun noon–4am, Thurs–Sat noon–5am.

Badeschiff 1, Donaukanal Ⓦ www.badeschiff.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Boat moored on the canal, with an outdoor swimming pool, bar and club (below decks in the Laderaum). Laderaum: Tues–Sat 10pm–4am. Pool: May–Oct daily 8am–midnight.

First Floor 1, Seitenstettengasse 1; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. A remake of a 1930s bar from Kärntnerstrasse, with a vast array of low-lit aquariums, courtesy of design team Eichinger oder Knechtl, packed with a sophisticated crowd. Mon–Sat 7pm–4am, Sun 8pm–3am.

Flex 1, Donaukanal/Augartenbrücke Ⓦ www.flex.at; U-Bahn Schottenring. The city's most serious dance-music club has a great sound system, and attracts the best DJs and a very young enthusiastic crowd; it's situated at canal level, overlooking Wagner's Schützenhaus. Daily 8pm–4am.

Jazzland 1, Franz-Josefs-Kai 29 Ⓦ www.jazzland.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Vienna's longest-running jazz venue is a cellar just below the Ruprechtskirche; music varies from trad to swing; gigs start at around 9pm (no reservations taken). Mon–Sat 7pm–2am.

Porgy & Bess 1, Riemergasse 11 Ⓦ www.porgy.or.at; U-Bahn Stubentor. This converted porn cinema is now the very stylish home of Vienna's top jazz venue, attracting top jazz and world music acts from all over the world; gigs start around 8.30pm. Daily 7.30pm–late.

Strandbar Hermann 3, Hermannpark 5 Ⓦ www.strandbarhermann.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Another of Vienna's great summertime outdoor DJ venues: cocktails, deckchairs and sand by the confluence of the River Wien (Wien-Fluss) and the Donaukanal. May–Oct daily 6pm–2am.

Ringstrasse

Ost 4, Schwindgasse 1 Ⓦ www.ost-klub.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz or tram D. As the name suggest, this place off Schwarzenbergplatz, specialises in live acts from "east of Rennweg" – expect anything from Thracian clarinettists to women bands from St Petersburg. Thurs–Sat 6pm–4am, plus other occasional nights.

Passage 1, Babenberger Passage, Burgring/Babenbergerstr Ⓦ www.sunshine.at; U-Bahn Museumsquartier/Volkstheater. This funky futurist conversion of a pedestrian underpass at the back of the Kunsthistorisches Museum is the closest Vienna gets to a flashy, full-on club, such as you'd find in Europe's bigger dance capitals. Daily 10pm–4am.

Pavillon Volksgarten 1, Burgring 1 Ⓦ www.pavillon.volksgarten.at; U-Bahn Volkstheater. The Pavillon is the relaxed garden café above the Volksgarten club; entry is usually free (apart from Tuesday's popular techno night), there's boules to play and usually live music or DJs later on. May to mid-Sept daily 11am–2am.

Volksgarten 1, Burgring 1 Ⓦ www.volksgarten.at; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Vienna's longest-running club is a firm favourite with the party crowd. The curvy Banane bar is groovy and the outdoor dance floor is a summertime treat. Daily 8pm–5am.

Vorstädte and beyond

Arena 3, Baumgasse 80 Ⓦ www.arena.co.at; U-Bahn Erdberg. It's a long trek out to this former slaughterhouse on the corner of Französengraben, but there's a real variety of stuff that goes on here – all-night raves, outdoor concerts, open-air cinema – so check the listings before setting out. Daily 4pm–2am.

B72 8, Stadtbahnbögen 72, Hernalser Gürtel Ⓦ www.b72.at; U-Bahn Alserstr. Dark, industrial, edgy designer club underneath the U-Bahn arches – features a mixture of DJs and live indie bands. Daily 8pm–4am.

Blue Box 7, Richtergasse 8 Ⓦ www.bluebox.at; U-Bahn Neubaugasse. Long-standing café with resident DJs and a good snack menu, including excellent brunch buffet. Live music from 8pm. Mon 6pm–2am, Tues–Sun 10am–2am.

Chelsea 8, U-Bahnbögen 29–31, Lerchenfelder Gürtel Ⓦ www.chelsea.co.at; U-Bahn Thaliastrasse. Favourite anglophile arches venue with up-and-coming indie guitar bands, techno DJs and even Premiership matches live on a Sun afternoon. Mon–Sat 6pm–4am, Sun 4pm–3am.

Donau 7, Karl Schweighofergasse 10 Ⓦ www.donau.schraeg.org; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Chill-out sounds from the in-house techno DJs, and strange projections on the walls. Mon–Sat 9pm–4am, Sun 9pm–2am.

Fluc 2, Praterstern 5 Ⓦ www.fluc.at; U-Bahn Praterstern. Anything (weird) goes at this industrial-style underground venue near the Prater, which features experimental live acts and DJs. Daily 6pm–2am.

Lesbian and gay nightlife

If Vienna's club scene is pretty small, the city's lesbian and gay scene is even smaller. There is only a handful of gay bars and clubs, scattered across the city, with a cluster in the "gay district" around the Naschmarkt. The social and political heart of the gay community is focused on the **Rosa-Lila Villa**, 6, Linke Wienzeile 102 (Ⓣ585 43 43, Ⓦwww.villa.at; U-Bahn Pilgramgasse), the pink and purple HQ which proudly flies the rainbow flag and proclaims itself as a *Lesben und Schwulen Haus*. There's an annual pride event, **Regenbogenparade** or Rainbow Parade held on the last Saturday in June, and an annual gay ball, **Regenbogenball**, in late January. For news (in German) on other events, visit Ⓦwww.hosiwien.at. For listings, consult the "lesbisch/schwul" section in *Falter*, pick up the monthly freebie *Xtra* (Ⓦwww.xtra-news.at), and check out the following places:

Café Berg 9, Berggasse 8; U-Bahn Schottentor (also reviewed on p.137). Cool café attached to the city's main gay bookshop with mixed gay/straight clientele, especially during the day. The food's good, and you can pick up flyers about up-and-coming gay events. Daily 10am–1am.

Felixx 6, Gumpendorferstr 5; U-Bahn Museumsquartier Ⓦwww.felixx-bar.at. Friendly, pink and purple late-night gay/lesbian bar-restaurant which puts on the occasional event. Daily 7pm–3am.

Frauencafé 8, Lange Gasse 11; U-Bahn Lerchenfelderstr Ⓦwww.frauencafe.com. Vienna's only permanent women-only space is a small, but friendly, café next door to a feminist bookshop. Thurs 7pm–midnight, Fri & Sat 7pm–2am.

Kaiserbründl 1, Weihburggasse 18–20 Ⓦwww.gaysauna.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Wonderfully ornate nineteenth-century *hammam* with additional, more recent, camp-it-up frescoes, popular with gay men of all ages. Mon–Thurs 2pm–midnight, non-stop Fri 2pm–2am, Sat 1pm–2am, Sun1pm–midnight.

Mango Bar 6, Laimgrubengasse 3; U-Bahn Kettenbrückengasse; Ⓦwww.mangobar.at. Smart, stylish and pretty cruisey bar, packed with young guys. Daily 9pm–4am.

Café Savoy 6, Stiegengasse 8; U-Bahn Kettenbrückengasse; Ⓦwww.village-bar.at. Apart from during the Saturday flea market, when a mixed crowd descends on the place, this high camp fin-de-siècle café is predominantly populated with gay men. Mon–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 9am–2am.

Village 6, Linke Wienzeile 36; U-Bahn Kettenbrückengasse. Swish, American-style cocktail bar that pulls in a crowd of young smart folk for its regular theme nights. Daily 8pm–3am.

Why Not? 1, Tiefergraben 22; U-Bahn Herrengasse Ⓦwww.why-not.at. Late-night gay/lesbian cellar bar and disco, popular with young gay men and women. Wed 9pm–3am men only, Fri & Sat 10pm–4am.

Café Willendorf 6, Linke Wienzeile 102 Ⓦwww.cafe-willendorf.at; U-Bahn Pilgramgasse. Popular café-restaurant inside the Rosa-Lila Villa, with a nice leafy courtyard. Another good place to pick up information about events. Daily 6pm–2am.

rhiz 8, Gürtelbögen 37–38, Lerchenfelder Gürtel Ⓦwww.rhiz.org; U-Bahn Lerchenfelder Strasse. A modish cross between a bar, a café and a techno club, with several DJs spinning everything from dance to trance from 9pm. Mon–Sat 6pm–4am, Sun 6pm–2am.

Roxy 6, Garbergasse 3 Ⓦwww.roxyclub.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Run by the slick Sunshine Enterprises posse who own *Passage*, this place attracts an eclectic mix of local and international DJ talent. Mon–Sat 10pm–4am.

Tanzcafé Jenseits 6, Nelkengasse 3; U-Bahn Neubaugasse. Tiny, discreet bohemian bar with a plush fin de siècle feel, and retro dance tunes from every decade on the jukebox. Mon–Sat 9pm–4am.

U4 12, Schönbrunnerstr 222 Ⓦwww.clubnet.at; U-Bahn Meidling-Hauptstrasse. Dark, cavernous disco, with frequent and varied gigs and themed nights. Daily 10pm–late.

The performing arts

Vienna prides itself on its musical associations, and classical music and opera, in particular, are heavily subsidized by the Austrian state. The chief cultural festival – featuring opera, music and theatre – is the **Wiener Festwochen** (Ⓦwww.festwochen.or.at), which lasts from early May until mid-June. At Easter, there's the **Osterklang** (Ⓦwww.osterklang.at) festival of classical music, and in April and May, there's the **Frühlingsfestival**, a themed music festival held alternately at the Konzerthaus and Musikverein. The city's film festival or **Viennale** and the **Wien Modern** festival of contemporary classical music both take place towards the end of October, but by far the busiest time of the year is **Fasching**, Vienna's ball season. And, last but not least, there's the **International Accordion Festival** (Ⓦwww.akkordeonfestival.at), held over the course of four weeks from late February to the middle of March.

Information and tickets

To find out **what's on**, pick up the tourist board's free monthly listings booklet *Wien-Programm*, which gives the schedules of the big opera and concert houses and theatres, plus a day-by-day concert guide, ball calendar and details of the current art exhibitions. The weekly listings tabloid *Falter* also has a pullout "Programm" section, which catalogues all theatre, dance, cabaret and classical musical concerts (look for "Musik-E") as well as listing all films.

Ticket **prices** vary enormously in Vienna: the Staatsoper is a case in point, with seats ranging from €10 to €250. For some events – most notably the Vienna Boys' Choir and the New Year's Day Concert – it's not so much the price as the availability that's a problem. However, the big state venues offer cheap *Stehplätze* on the day of the performance and some offer unsold tickets at a discount to students, around an hour or thirty minutes before the show starts.

The cheapest way of **buying tickets** is to go to the venue's own box office. With the Staatsoper, Volksoper, Burgtheater, Akademietheater and Schauspielhaus, you can either buy direct or from their shared central box office, the *Bundestheaterkassen*, not far from the Staatsoper at 1, Goethegasse 1 (Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat & Sun 9am–noon; Ⓣ514 44-7880, Ⓦwww.bundestheater.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz). There's also a ticket booth, Wien-Ticket Pavillon, next to the Staatsoper (daily 10am–7pm), which sells tickets for all venues, and occasionally has half-price tickets for musicals and for other events.

Opera and classical music

Vienna has a musical pedigree second to none. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven spent much of their time here, as did local-born Schubert. Brahms and Bruckner followed in their wake, and coincided with the great waltz fever generated by the Strauss family and Josef Lanner. In the early twentieth century, the Vienna opera house was under the baton of Mahler, while its concert halls resounded to the atonal music of Schönberg, Webern and Berg.

Vienna still boasts one of Europe's top opera houses in the **Staatsoper**, served by one of its finest orchestras, the **Wiener Philharmoniker** (Ⓦwww.wienerphilharmoniker.at). The orchestra's New Year's Day Concert in the Musikverein is broadcast across the globe and relayed live on an enormous screen in front of the Rathaus. When the big state theatres are closed in July and August, opera and classical music concerts captured on film are also shown for free every evening outside the Rathaus.

Vienna may be an expensive place, but its top opera houses and concert halls are open to even the poorest music student thanks to the system of *Stehplätze* or **standing-room tickets**, which can cost as little as €2 each. *Stehplätze* are limited to one per person and usually go on sale one hour before the performance (for very popular concerts, you may find that tickets go on sale somewhat earlier, so check first). It's standard practice, once you've got into the auditorium, to tie a scarf to the railings to reserve your standing place. Bags and coats, though, should be put into the cloakroom.

The most famous musical institution in the city is, of course, the **Wiener Sängerknaben** (Ⓣ216 39 42, Ⓦwww.wsk.at), or Vienna Boys' Choir, which performs Mass at the Hofburgkapelle in the Hofburg every Sunday at 9.15am (Jan–June & mid-Sept to Dec). Tickets for the Mass (€5–30) are sold out weeks in advance, though some are held over each week and go on sale on Fridays (Fri 11am–1pm & 3–5pm). Book in advance by fax or email (Ⓕ533 99 27-75, Ⓔhmk@aon.at), stating which Sunday Mass you wish to attend, and you will be sent back a reservation slip to take to the box office (along with cash to pay for the tickets) on arrival in Vienna. The other option is to settle for one of the free *Stehplätze*, which are distributed before Mass; get there for 8.15am to be sure of a place (although some people leave early having got bored). Be warned, however, that the choir remains out of sight up in the organ loft to all but the most expensive seats for the whole of Mass.

Opera and operetta

Kammeroper 1, Fleischmarkt 24 Ⓣ512 01 00, Ⓦwww.wienerkammeroper.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Vienna's smallest opera house is a Jugendstil theatre hidden in the backstreets of the Innere Stadt. Little-known works prevail – anything from Rossini to Britten – and the immediacy of the venue is a boon.

Staatsoper 1, Opernring 2 Ⓣ513 15 13, Ⓦwww.wiener-staatsoper.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Vienna's largest opera house (see p.105) stages a staggering forty operas a season. It's a conservative place, but attracts the top names, and has the benefit of the Wiener Philharmoniker in the pit. Some 500 *Stehplätze* (€2–3.50) go on sale every night from the west side of the foyer, an hour before the curtain goes up. Closed July & Aug.

Theater-an-der-Wien 6, Linke Wienzeile 6 Ⓣ588 85, Ⓦwww.theater-wien.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Famous as the venue where Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* premièred, this theatre has returned to its roots and now concentrates on opera; tickets range from around €10 to €150 with *Stehplätze* for €7.

Volksoper 9, Währinger Str 78 Ⓣ514 44-30, Ⓦwww.volksoper.at; U-Bahn Währingserstr-Volksoper or tram #40, #41 or #42. Vienna's number two opera house is situated in the ninth district, near

Waltz and schmaltz

It's easy enough to hear a bit of classic Strauss or light Mozart at any time of the year in Vienna, though tickets don't come cheap: €35–50 is the average price range. The **Vienna Walzer Concerts** (Ⓣ512 57 90, Ⓦwww.strauss-concerts.com) perform in Strauss and the like decked out in Biedermeier costume every week, at the Kursalon in the Stadtpark. The **Salonorchester Alt Wien** (Ⓣ512 57 90, Ⓦstrauss-konzerte.at) also play there, and at other good-looking venues across the city. The **Wiener Residenzorchester** (Ⓣ817 21 78, Ⓦwww.residenzorchester.at) perform Mozart and Strauss in period costume in the Palais Auersperg behind Parlament. The **Mozart Ensemble** put on chamber concert performances all year in the ornate *sala terrena* at Singerstr 7 (Ⓣ911 90 77, Ⓦwww.mozarthaus.at). There are also regular **Schönbrunner Schlosskonzerte** (Ⓣ812 50 04, Ⓦwww.imagevienna.com) of Mozart, Strauss and the like in parts of Schönbrunn. Finally, if you yearn to hear schmaltzy Viennese songs sung live in a more informal setting, check out **Café Schmid Hansl**, 18, Schulgasse 31 (Ⓣ406 36 58, Ⓦwww.schmidhansl.at; tram #40 or #41 from U-Bahn Volksoper; Tues–Sat 8pm–4am).

the Gürtel, and specializes in operetta, plus the occasional, more adventurous musical and opera production; tickets range from around €10 to €150 with seventy or so *Stehplätze* a night (€1.50–4).

Classical music

Bösendorfer Saal 4, Graf Starhemberggasse 14 ⓣ504 66 51-44, ⓦwww.boesendorfer.com; U-Bahn Taubstummengasse. Chamber music concerts performed using Bösendorfer pianos, and held in a hall with excellent acoustics, belonging to the famous Austrian piano manufacturers.

Konzerthaus 3, Lothringerstr 20 ⓣ242 002, ⓦwww.konzerthaus.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Early twentieth-century concert hall designed by Viennese duo Helmer & Fellner. The classical music programme here tends to be a bit more adventurous and varied than the Musikverein's, with the odd nod to world music, jazz and even pop.

Musikverein 1, Bösendorferstr 12 ⓣ505 81 90, ⓦwww.musikverein-wien.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Two ornate concert halls in one building, gilded from top to bottom inside. The larger of the two, the Grosser Saal, has the best acoustics in the country, and is the unofficial home of the Wiener Philharmoniker, while the smaller hall, the Brahmssaal, is used mainly for chamber concerts. Stehplätze available for the Grosser Saal (€5–7).

Theatre and musicals

Obviously for non-German speakers, most of Vienna's **theatres** and satirical **cabarets** have limited appeal. However, there are a couple of English-speaking theatre groups, a few theatres that specialize in musicals, one dedicated dance venue, several puppet theatres, where language is less of a problem, and the Burgtheater, whose interior alone is worth the price of a ticket.

Drama and musicals

Burgtheater 1, Dr-Karl-Lueger-Ring 2 ⓣ514 44-4145, ⓦwww.burgtheater.at; U-Bahn Herrengasse. Vienna's most prestigious theatrical stage puts on innovative and serious drama in rep. The foyer and staircases are spectacular; the auditorium was modernized after bomb damage in 1945. Tickets cost from around €4 to €44, with 150 *Stehplätze* (€2) going on sale every night, an hour before the curtain goes up. Closed July & Aug.

International Theatre 9, Porzellangasse 8 ⓣ319 62 72, ⓦwww.internationaltheatre.at; tram D. Local-based, expat (mostly American) company with a main venue on the corner of Müllnergasse and Porzellangasse, and a smaller stage, *The Fundus*, in the cellar of the nearby Servitenkirche; closed July & Aug.

TanzQuartierWien (TQW) 7, Museumsplatz 1 ⓣ581 35 91, ⓦwww.tqw.at; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. Experimental dance performance space, in the Kunsthalle building in the Museums Quartier complex.

Vienna's English Theatre 8, Josefsgasse 12 ⓣ402 12 60, ⓦwww.englishtheatre.at; U-Bahn Lerchenfelderstr. Larger, professionally run venue, serviced by interesting productions flown in from abroad (mostly London and New York).

Volkstheater 7, Neustiftgasse 1 ⓣ523 27 76, ⓦwww.volkstheater.at; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Late nineteenth-century theatre designed by Helmer & Fellner, with the groovy *Rotes Bar* to hang out in. Modern plays, foreign works and classics and even the odd operetta.

Puppet theatre

Figurentheater Lilarum 3, Göllnergasse 8 ⓣ710 26 66, ⓦwww.lilarum.at; U-Bahn Kardinal-Nagl-Platz. Puppet theatre out in Landstrasse, with several performances a day. Wed & Fri–Sun and during school holidays.

Märchenbühne der Apfelbaum 7, Kirchengasse 41 ⓣ523 17 29-20, ⓦwww.maerchenbuehne.at; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Puppet theatre specializing in classic fairy tales, so even without any German you can at least follow the plot. Sat & Sun.

Schönbrunner Schlossmarionettentheater 13, Schloss Schönbrunn, Hofratsktrakt ⓣ817 32 47; ⓦwww.marionettentheater.at; U-Bahn Hietzing. String puppet theatre in Schönbrunn specializing in over-long Mozart operas – try and catch a different show if you can. Performances Wed–Sun.

Cinema

Austrian **cinema** is not really up there with the greats, and unless your German is up to scratch, you're best off sticking to British and American films. One film that's fun to see, and is shown here every weekend at the *Burg-Kino* (see opposite), is **The Third Man** (*Der Dritte Mann*), made in 1949, set amidst the

rubble of postwar Vienna and starring Orson Welles. The best place to check out the week's cinema **listings** is either *Der Standard* or *Falter*, or on the website Ⓦwww.film.at. *OF* means it's in the original without subtitles, *Omengu* means it's in the original with English subtitles, *OmU* means it's in the original with German subtitles, but should not be confused with *OmÜ*, which means it's in the original, but has a live voice-over German translation. And finally, *dF* means it's dubbed into German. Cinema **tickets** cost €8 or less; Monday (*Kino-Montag*) is cheap ticket day. Vienna's international film festival, the **Viennale**, takes place in the middle of October and is definitely worth catching. In July and August, you can watch **open-air films** in the Augarten in Vienna's second district and outside the Rathaus.

Artis International 1, Schultergasse/Jordangasse Ⓣ535 65 70; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Central multiplex cinema showing films in English in six different salons.

Bellaria 7, Museumstr 3 Ⓣ523 75 91; U-Bahn Volkstheater. Old Neubau cinema that specializes in German and Austrian black-and-white movies.

Breitenseer Lichtspiele 14, Breitenseerstr 21 Ⓣ982 21 73, Ⓦwww.nitschi.at/bsl; U-Bahn Hütteldorferstr. Vienna's oldest cinema, which opened in 1909, is still going strong, with much the same fittings.

Burg 1, Opernring 19 Ⓣ587 84 06, Ⓦwww.burgkino.at; U-Bahn Museumsquartier. Two-screen cinema on the Ringstr that shows films in the original, without subtitles. *The Third Man* has a regular spot (Fri 10.45pm & Sun 3.15pm).

English Cinema Haydn 6, Mariahilferstr 57 Ⓣ587 22 62, Ⓦwww.haydnkino.at; U-Bahn Neubaugasse. As the name suggests, this is a cinema that shows the latest films in English without subtitles.

Filmmuseum 1, Augustinerstr 1 Ⓣ533 70 54, Ⓦwww.filmmuseum.at; U-Bahn Karlsplatz. Vienna's main art-house cinema, on the ground floor of the Albertina, with a very esoteric programme, all in the original, generally without subtitles.

Gartenbaukino 1, Parkring 12 Ⓣ512 23 54, Ⓦwww.gartenbaukino.at; U-Bahn Stubentor. 1960s Ringstrasse cinema – the largest in Vienna – owned by the Viennale, showing a mixture of classics and recent releases, usually in the original language.

Metro Kino 1, Johannesgasse 4 Ⓣ512 18 03, Ⓦwww.filmarchiv.at; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Amazing, ornate, centrally located cinema run by the Austrian Film Archives, showing classics and mini-festivals.

Listings

Books Shakespeare & Co, 1, Sterngasse 2 Ⓦwww.shakespeare.co.at; U-Bahn Schwedenplatz. Tiny, friendly English-language bookstore packed to the rafters with a great selection of novels, art books and magazines.

Embassies and consulates Australia, 4, Mattiellistr 2–4 Ⓣ50674, Ⓦwww.australian-embassy.at; Canada, 1, Laurenzerberggasse. 2 Ⓣ531 383 000, Ⓦwww.kanada.at; Ireland, 1, Rotenturmstr 16–18 Ⓣ715 4246; UK, 3, Jaurèsgasse 10 Ⓣ716 135 151, Ⓦwww.britishembassy.at; USA, 9, Boltzmanngasse 16 Ⓣ31339, Ⓦwww.usembassy.at.

Exchange Outside normal banking hours, the exchange booths at the airport (daily 6am–11pm), Westbahnhof (daily 7am–10pm) and Südbahnhof (daily 6.30am–10pm) are open.

Horse-racing From Sept to June trotting races take place on Sun in the Prater at the Krieau Trabrennbahn, 2, Nordportalstr 274 (Ⓦwww.krieau.at; U-Bahn Krieau); flat racing takes place on Sat from March to Nov at the venerable Freudenau Rennbahn, 2, Rennbahnstr 65 (Ⓦwww.freudenau.at; bus #77A from U-Bahn Schlachthausgasse).

Hospital Allgemeines Krankenhaus (AKH), 9, Währinger Gürtel 18–20 (Ⓣ40400, Ⓦwww.akhwien.at; U-Bahn Michelbeuern-AKH).

Internet *Bignet* Internet café, 1, Hoher Markt 8–9 (daily 9am–11pm; Ⓦwww.bignet.at), plus more congenial cafés such as *Café Stein* (Ⓦwww.cafe-stein.com) and *Das Möbel* (Ⓦwww.dasmobel.com).

Laundry Laundrette: 9, Nussdorferstr 80 (U-Bahn Nussdorfer Str); dry cleaners at 1, Rauhensteingasse 1 (U-Bahn Stephansplatz).

Lost property Zentrales Fundamt, 18, Bastiengasse 22 (Ⓣ4000-8091). If the item was lost on public transport phone Ⓣ79 09 43-500; if it was lost on Austrian Railways phone Ⓣ58 00 22-222.

Maps Freytag & Berndt, 1, Kohlmarkt 9; U-Bahn Stephansplatz. Flagship store of Austria's most prestigious map-makers, with loads of maps, as well as guides on Vienna and the rest of the world in English, including a large selection of *Rough Guides*.
Markets Naschmarkt, 6 & 7, Linke & Rechte Wienzeile (Mon–Sat); U-Bahn Karlsplatz/Kettenbrückengasse: Vienna's most exotic fruit and veg market, with Turkish, Balkan, Chinese, Middle Eastern and Austrian produce, takeaway stalls plus clothes and sundries. On Sat, there's a flea market (*Flohmarkt*) extension west of Kettenbrückengasse U-Bahn. Freyung (Fri & Sat); U-Bahn Schottentor/Herrengasse; organic fruit, veg and other edibles from the neighbouring *Länder*, plus a fair few arts and crafts stalls.
Police The main police station in the first district is at 1, Deutschmeisterplatz 3; U-Bahn Schottenring.
Post office The main post office is at 1, Fleischmarkt 19 (U-Bahn Schwedenplatz); daily 6am–10pm.

Soccer Vienna's top soccer (*Fussball*) teams are SK Rapid Wien (Ⓦ www.skrapid.at), who play at the 20,000-capacity Gerhard Hanappi Stadion on Keisslergasse in Hütteldorf (U-Bahn Hütteldorf), and FK Austria Wien (Ⓦ www.fk-austria.at), their main rivals, who play at the 12,000-capacity Franz-Horr-Stadion on Fischhofgasse in Favoriten (tram #67 two stops from U-Bahn Reumannplatz); big international games are played at the 50,000-plus capacity Ernst-Happel-Stadion in the Prater (U-Bahn Stadion).
Swimming The Amalienbad, 10, Reumannplatz 23 (U-Bahn Reumannplatz), has a wonderful Art Deco interior, particularly the sauna. The Angelibad, 21, An der oberen Alten Donau (U-Bahn Neue Donau), is an open-air riverside swimming place. Jörgerbad, 17, Jörgerstr 42–44 (tram #43) is also very beautiful inside, while Krapfenwaldbad, 19, Krapfenwaldlgasse 65–73 (bus #38A) is a swish, stylish 1920s outdoor pool up in the foothills of the Wienerwald (May–Sept) with great views; so too the Schafbergbad, 18, Josef-Redl-Gasse 2 (bus #42B).

Travel details

Trains

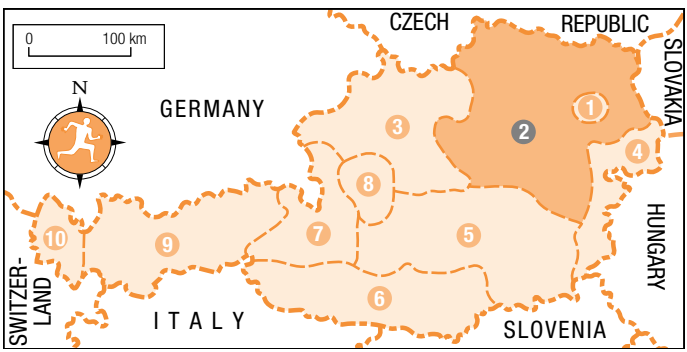
Vienna (Franz-Josefs Bahnhof) to: Eggenburg (hourly; 1hr–1hr 20min); Gmünd NÖ (every 1–2hr; 2hr–2hr 20min); Klosterneuburg-Kierling (every 30min; 15min); Krems an der Donau (every 30min–1hr; 1hr–1hr 15min); Tulln (every 30min; 30–45min).
Vienna (Südbahnhof) to: Baden (every 30min; 30min); Bruck an der Leitha (every 30min; 25–35min); Bruck an der Mur (hourly; 1hr 55min); Graz (hourly; 2hr 40min); Klagenfurt (every 1–2hr; 4hr–4hr 15min); Laa an der Thaya (every 30min–1hr; 1hr 30min–2hr); Leoben (every 2hr; 2hr 15min); Marchegg (7–12 daily; 45min); Mödling (every 15min; 25min); Neusiedl am See (every 2hr; 50min); Semmering (hourly; 1hr 45min); Villach (every 2hr; 4hr 25min–4hr 50min); Wiener Neustadt (every 30min; 50min).
Vienna (Westbahnhof) to: Attnang-Puchheim (hourly; 2hr 35min); Bregenz (8 daily; 10hr); Feldkirch (8 daily; 7hr 40min); Innsbruck (every 2hr; 5hr 20min); Kufstein (every 2hr; 3hr 15min–3hr 35min); Linz (1–2hr; 1hr 50min–2hr); Melk (every 1–2hr; 1hr); Pöchlarn (every 1–2hr; 1hr 15min); St Anton (8 daily; 6hr 45min); St Pölten (1–2hr; 40min); Salzburg (1–2hr; 3hr–3hr 20min); Wels (hourly; 2hr 10min).
Vienna (Wien-Nord) to: Bad Deutsch Altenburg (hourly; 1hr 10min); Flughafen Wien-Schwechat (every 30min; 30min); Petronell-Carnuntum/Hainburg Ungartor (hourly; 1hr 5min–1hr 15min); Retz (every 2hr; 1hr 5min).

International trains (direct)

Vienna (Südbahnhof) to: Berlin Zoo (1 daily; 9hr 30min); Bratislava (every 2hr; 1hr 10min); Brno (5 daily; 1hr 40min); Florence (2–3 daily; 11hr 30min); Ljubljana (3 daily; 6hr); Prague (3–4 daily; 6hr 30min); Rome (1 daily; 13hr 30min); Venice (4–6 daily; 8hr); Warsaw (3 daily; 8hr 30min); Zagreb (2 daily; 7hr).
Vienna (Westbahnhof) to: Amsterdam (4 daily; 12hr 30min); Belgrade (2 daily; 10–11hr); Bucharest (1 daily; 16hr 20min); Budapest (6 daily; 2hr 45min); Cologne (5 daily; 9hr 30min); Munich (10 daily; 6hr); Paris Est (1 daily; 13hr 50min); Zurich (3 daily; 9hr).

2

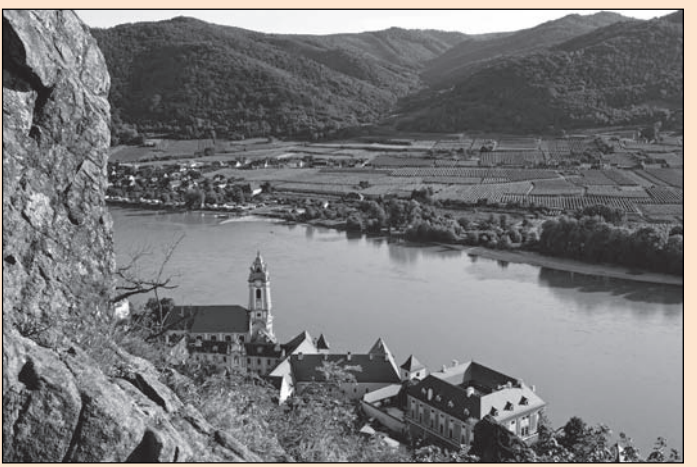
Lower Austria



CHAPTER 2

Highlights

- **Krems an der Donau** Hugely atmospheric old trading town, the finest along the Danube, with a wonderfully preserved late-medieval centre. See p.163
- **Heurigen** Quaff local wine in Heurigen, such as those that are easily found in Stein. See p.167
- **The Wachau** Evocative castles rub shoulders with grand abbeys and idyllic vineyards along the most picturesque stretch of the Danube. See p.170
- **Melk** A visual feast of High Baroque and probably the most spectacularly sited abbey in all Austria. See p.174
- **Schloss Drosendorf** Sleep under stucco at this Renaissance castle in a tiny walled town perched above the Thaya. See p.187
- **Altenburg** Baroque monastery as awesome as Melk, yet with a fraction of the visitors. See p.189
- **Marchegg** Tiny walled town by the Slovak border that's perfect for observing nesting white and black storks. See p.196
- **Puchberg-am-Schneeberg and Raxalpe** Two mountain excursions within striking distance of one another: a cog railway up the Schneeberg and Austria's first-ever cable car up the Raxalpe. See p.211



▲ Dürnstein, the Wachau

2

Lower Austria

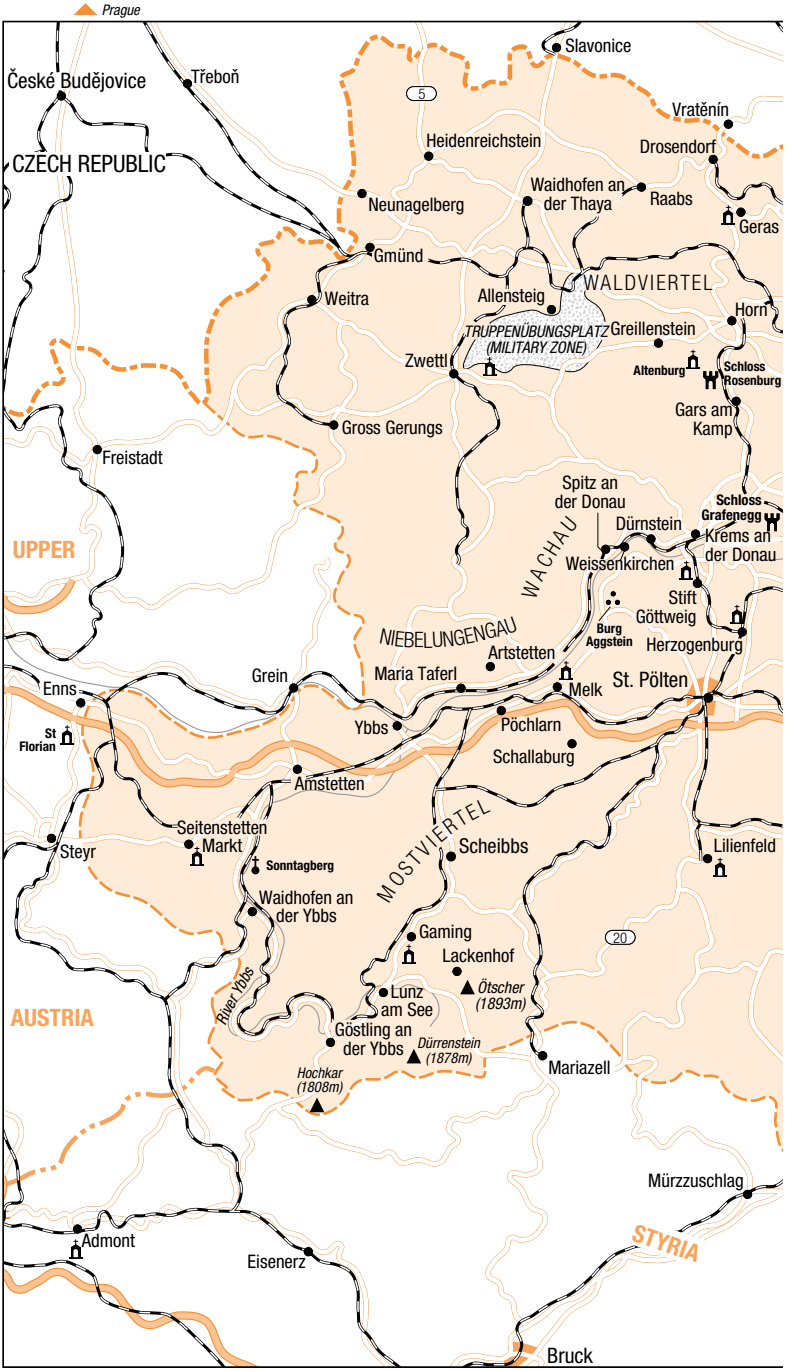
Lower Austria, or Niederösterreich (Ⓦwww.noe.co.at), is easily the largest and most populous of all the Austrian *Länder*, yet also the least explored by tourists. One reason is that, apart from the foothills on the border with Styria, the landscape doesn't conform to the country's alpine image. Most visitors don't come to Austria to roam the gently rolling countryside that characterizes much of Lower Austria, or the unrelenting flat plain of the Marchfeld that extends east of Vienna. Only the famously un-blue Danube (Donau), which splits the region in two, attracts and justifies tourists in any great number, particularly along the most scenic stretch known as the Wachau.

Lower Austria's other big problem is that it has something of an identity crisis. Together with Upper Austria (Oberösterreich), it forms the country's historic heartland and gives its name to the entire country. But while Upper Austria has Linz as its regional capital, Lower Austria's natural focus is Vienna. This was long the regional capital, but since 1986, this privilege has gone to the provincial town of **St Pölten**. Yet, given a population that's more than thirty times smaller, St Pölten's never going to replace Vienna as the region's natural focus and main transport hub. This means that much of Lower Austria – particularly the venerable Danube towns of **Klosterneuburg,** with its glorious monastery, and **Tulln,** the birthplace of celebrated artist Egon Schiele – are easy day-trips from Vienna.

However, day-trips will only allow you to skim the surface and so miss out on the region's appealing slow pace of life. The **Wachau** stretch of the **Danube valley** in particular deserves several days. You could easily spend a whole day just exploring **Krems**, the remarkable medieval town at its eastern end. From Krems, the river cuts its way through steep, vine-clad hills, emerging some 40km later at **Melk**, whose cliff-top monastery gets more visitors than any other in the country. Both the above places are an hour by train from Vienna, but to explore the valley's smaller wine-producing villages – something that's possible by bike path, road, rail or river – or the cliff-top castles in between, it's worth setting aside a day or two.

Some of Lower Austria's more remote corners are, in any case, simply too far away to be reached comfortably in a day. This is particularly true of the alpine foothills around the mountain spa-resort of **Semmering**, and along the **Ybbstal**, which lies along the southern border with Styria. It's also true of the **Weinviertel** and **Waldviertel**, the charming but little-visited northern agricultural regions.

The **Wienerwald**, which stretches away southwest of Vienna, is another area that needs to be taken at a leisurely pace, allowing time for walking the densely wooded hills: the spa-town of **Baden** or neighbouring **Mödling** are the perfect


Prague
České Budějovice
Třeboň
CZECH REPUBLIC
Slavonice
5
Vratěnín
Heidenreichstein
Drosendorf
Waidhofen an der Thaya
Raabs
Geras
Neunagelberg
Gmünd
WALDVIERTEL
Weitra
Allensteig
Horn
TRUPPENÜBUNGSPLATZ (MILITARY ZONE)
Greillenstein
Zwettl
Altenburg
Schloss Rosenburg
Gars am Kamp
Gross Gerungs
Freistadt
Spitz an der Donau
Schloss Grafenegg
Dürnstein
Krems an der Donau
UPPER
WACHAU
Weissenkirchen
Stift Göttweig
Burg Aggstein
NIEBELUNGENGAU
Artstetten
Herzogenburg
Linz
Grein
Maria Taferl
Melk
St. Pölten
Enns
St Florian
Ybbs
Pöchlarn
Schallaburg
Amstetten
Seitenstetten Markt
Steyr
Sonntagberg
MOSTVIERTEL
Scheibbs
Lilienfeld
Waidhofen an der Ybbs
Gaming
Lackenhof
20
Ötscher (1893m)
River Ybbs
Lunz am See
AUSTRIA
Göstling an der Ybbs
Dürrenstein (1878m)
Mariazell
Hochkar (1808m)
Mürzzuschlag
STYRIA
Admont
Eisenerz
Salzburg
Bruck

LOWER AUSTRIA
Brno
Vranov
Znojmo
Hardegg
30
Retz
Mikulov
Břeclav
N
45
Laa an der Thaya
2
Poysdorf
WEINVIERTEL
Hohenau
Eggenburg
4
Mistelbach
Hollabrunn
6
7
SLOVAKIA
Stockerau
3
River Danube
Traismauer
Tulln
Klosterneuburg
Gänserndorf
VIENNA
Marchegg
MARCHFELD
BRATISLAVA
WIENERWALD
A1
Eckartsau
Orth
Hainburg
Petronell
Bad Deutsch Altenburg
Mödling bei Wien
Laxenburg
Rohrau
Mayerling
Heiligenkreuz
Bruck
A4
Baden
A3
Neusiedl am See
Eisenstadt
Budapest
Puchberg am Schneeberg
Wiener Neustadt
Neusiedler See
Schneeberg (2076m)
Raxalpe (2069m)
Neunkirchen
BURGENLAND
Payerbach
Sopron
Gloggnitz
Reichenau
Semmering
Aspang Markt
HUNGARY
A2
0
50 km
Graz

launching pads. There are, of course, one or two places that can be happily visited on a day-trip; particularly **Wiener Neustadt**, which is less than an hour by train from Vienna, and whose attractions are easily covered in a day.

Klosterneuburg

Separated from the Vienna's northern city limits by a thin wedge of the hilly Wienerwald, but effectively a suburb, **KLOSTERNEUBURG** is famous for its imposing Augustinian **monastery**. The oldest and richest in Austria, its Baroque domes and neo-Gothic spires soar above the right bank of the Danube. A particularly good time to visit is late July when open-air **opera** performances are staged in the monastery's Kaiserhof (Ⓦwww.operklosterneuburg.at). Monastery aside, **Klosterneuburg** is also worth a look for the **Sammelung Essl**, a modern art collection hidden in its suburbs and filled with intriguing pieces of postwar Austrian art.

Stift Klosterneuburg

Stift Klosterneuburg (Ⓦwww.stift-klosterneuburg.at) was founded in the twelfth century by the Babenberg Duke Leopold III, who, so the story goes, vowed to build an abbey on the spot where he found his wife's veil, which had been carried off by the wind from a nearby castle. Leopold was canonized in 1485, and later became the patron saint of Austria, making Klosterneuburg a popular place of pilgrimage. Having withstood the Turkish siege of 1683, the monastery enjoyed a second golden age under the emperor Karl VI (1711–40), who planned a vast imperial palace that was never fully realized, though the one completed wing gives some idea of the grandiose plans.

To visit the monastery, you must sign up for **tours** at the ticket office by the monastery entrance at Rathausplatz 20. The main two are the **Sacred Tour** (in German, daily hourly 10am–5pm; in English, Sat & Sun 2pm; €8), a guided tour that lets you see the Stiftskirche, the cloisters and the Verduner Altar, and the **Imperial Tour** (mid-April to mid-Nov daily 9am–6pm; mid-Nov to mid-April 30min guided tour by appointment daily 12.15pm; €8), which allows visitors to explore the state rooms of the Residenztrakt. A **Kombiticket** for both costs €11.50.

The **Sacred Tour** starts with the **Stiftskirche**, which still hints at its origins as a Romanesque basilica, despite overzealous nineteenth-century restoration. Neo-Gothic finials and other details obscure the west front of the church, but the south door, with its blind arcading, is still much as it would have been in the Babenbergs' day. Inside, the church is a riot of seventeenth-century early Baroque, replete with frescoes and mountains of stucco-work. The most impressive craftsmanship is in the chancel: the richly gilded choir stalls, the exuberant high altar and, above all, Johann Michael Rottmayr's *Assumption*, without doubt the pick of the frescoes.

To the north of the church are the **medieval cloisters**, built in the late thirteenth century. The central courtyard is encroached upon, in the southwest corner, by the little L-shaped Freisingerkapelle, containing the episcopal tomb of its namesake, who died in 1410. More intriguing is the polygonal **Brunnenhaus**, or wellhouse, which juts out into the courtyard from the eastern cloister, and boasts some fine tracery over the portal; the highlight, though, is the magnificent, giant bronze candelabra, crafted in Verona in the twelfth century. The monastery's outstanding treasure, however, is the **Verduner Altar**, in the

Leopoldskapelle to the east of the cloisters. This stunning winged altar, completed in 1181 by Nicholas of Verdun, comprises more than fifty gilded enamel plaques depicting biblical scenes from both testaments. Sadly, you can't get close enough to appreciate the detail, but the overall effect is dazzling. The top half of St Leopold is buried in the Wiener Werkstätte casket underneath the altar; his legs are buried beneath the nearby wrought-iron grille.

You can get some idea of the Spanish-bred emperor Karl VI's big plans for Klosterneuburg on the **Imperial Tour** from the **Residenztrakt**, to the east of the medieval buildings. Plans for a vast imperial edifice were drawn up in 1730, enclosing four inner courtyards, in deliberate imitation of El Escorial in Spain, which the Habsburgs had recently lost to the Bourbons. The building was intended to sprout numerous domes, each to be capped by a crown representing one of the Habsburg lands. In the end, the money ran out even before the completion of the first courtyard, and the roof sports just two domes, one capped with the imperial crown, the other with the archducal hat of Niederösterreich. The showpiece of the Baroque wing is the **Marmorsaal** (Marble Hall), with its giant oval dome, supported by coupled composite columns and decorated with frescoes by Daniel Gran glorifying the Habsburg dynasty.

After the tours, it's worth taking a stroll round the outlying monastic buildings, particularly those surrounding the **Leopoldhof**, a secluded little cobbled courtyard to the northwest of the monastery church, with an attractive, late-Gothic oriel window on one side. The main courtyard, Stiftsplatz, to the south of the church, centres on a lovely Gothic **Lichtssäule** (Lighted Column), once a common sight in Austrian towns, now a rare, surviving example. The Imperial tour also includes entrance into the monastery's **Stiftsmuseum**, which is particularly worth a visit for the four painted panels, originally attached to the Verduner Altar in 1331, as well as several Renaissance bronzes, ivory work and nineteenth and twentieth-century paintings, including an early work by Schiele.

Sammlung Essl and Museum Gugging

Austria's largest private modern art collection, **Sammlung Essl** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €7; Wed 6–9pm; free; Ⓦ www.sammlung-essl.at), a dreary 1km walk south along the Vienna road from Stift Klosterneuburg, amazingly features just about every renowned postwar Austrian artist. The collection has been accumulated by the Essl family, who made their millions with the bauMax chain of DIY stores.

It's housed in a concrete modernist edifice designed by Heinz Tesar. The big white rooms on its first floor display an overview of the collection, which is characterized by large abstract canvases, but ranges from Surrealist works by Maria Lassnig and "kaleidoscopic landscapes" by Friedrich Hundertwasser to works by the leading lights of Aktionismus, Vienna's violent version of 1960s performance art. In addition to Austrian art, there are works by international contemporary artists such as Britain's Sean Scully and the American Nam June Paik. The other half of the gallery space is given over to temporary exhibitions drawn from the collection. On the second floor, you'll find the Grosser Saal, with its distinctive floating, curved ceiling, a **café** and a **bookshop**.

A five-minute walk south beside the railway tracks from Essl Museum, the **Schömer-Haus** (Mon–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–1pm & 4–6pm; free) is another Tesar confection. Though primarily an office building, it doubles as an interesting space for events and installations. You're free to wander around and appreciate the pieces of modern art dotted around the staircase that spirals around the atrium; a free audio guide is available at reception.

Those with a strong interest in art should make the effort to reach the **Museum Gugging** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €7; Ⓦ www.gugging.org), in Maria Gugging, 5km or so west of Klosterneuburg. The museum puts on exhibitions of work by "Gugging Artists": past and present patients at the local psychiatric clinic who have undergone art therapy, and are now embarking on a career as an artist, plus other visiting artists' works. To reach the museum, take bus #239 from either Klosterneuburg-Kierling station or Heiligenstadt U-Bahn in Vienna itself.

Practicalities

There's a **free shuttle bus** to the Sammlung Essl (Tues–Sun every 2hr; 25min) that leaves from outside the Albertina. Otherwise you can take **S-Bahn line S40**; trains depart from Franz-Josefs Bahnhof every half-hour, taking just eight minutes to get to Klosterneuburg-Weidling (for the Essl Museum), and twelve minutes to get to Klosterneuburg-Kierling (for the monastery). To reach the Essl Museum, walk under the railway tracks and turn left, following the signs to the gallery. For the monastery, which is clearly visible from the train station, head up Hundskehle, and then take the steps to your left. To get to the monastery from the gallery, cross back over the railway tracks and head up Leopoldstrasse.

The **tourist office** (daily: April 11am–5pm; May–Sept 10am–7pm; early Oct 11am–5pm; Ⓣ 02243/32038, Ⓦ www.klosterneuburg.net) is conveniently located in the Klosterneuburg-Kierling train station. Its list of **private rooms** (2) gives the best local budget accommodation options. Otherwise, *Hotel Schrannenhof* (Ⓣ 02243/32072, Ⓦ www.schrannenhof.at; 6) on Niedermarkt, opposite the train station, is a nicely modernized hotel that has retained plenty of original features. The hotel also runs the cheaper, but equally good *Pension Alte Mühle*, Mühlengasse 36 (Ⓣ 02243/37788, Ⓦ www.hotel-altemuehle.at; 4), ten minutes' walk up Stadtmarkt and Kierlinger Strasse. The *Donaupark* **campsite** (Ⓣ 02243/52757, Ⓦ www.campingklosterneuburg.at; mid-March to Oct) is by the Danube, on the other side of the railway from town; it's efficiently run, and handy for the Klosterneuburg-Kierling train station.

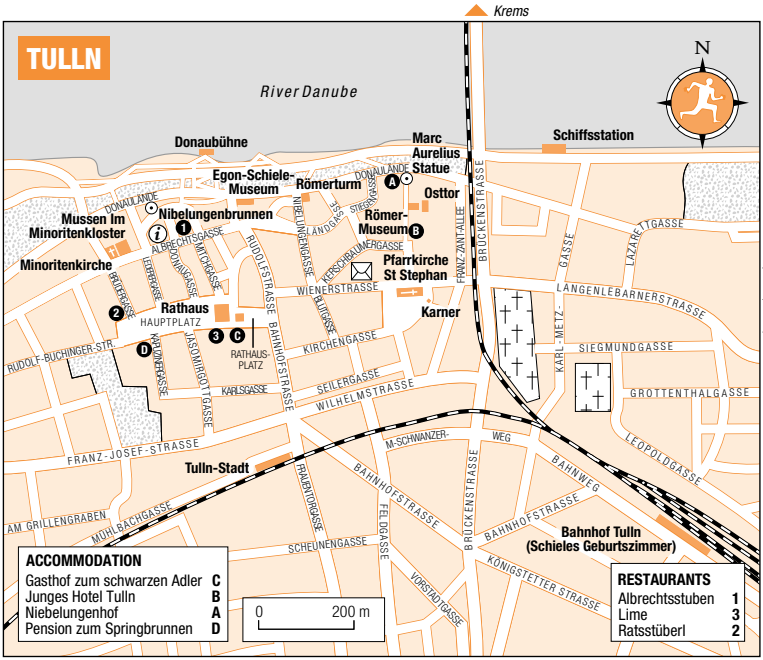
If you want a bite **to eat**, try the *Stiftscafé*, next door to the monastery, which offers reasonable food and a chance to sample local wine. The upper floor of the pricier neighbouring *Stiftskeller* restaurant is open all day, though the *cellar* itself only opens in the evenings. A much more congenial place to have an evening meal is the *Römerhof*, up the Stadtplatz at the beginning of Kierlinger Strasse, which offers pub snacks, a range of *Spätzle* and beers on tap.

Tulln an der Donau

Beyond Klosterneuburg the wide plain of the Tullnerfeld – a patchwork of vineyards and fields of maize and sunflowers – takes hold, leading up to the quiet provincial town of **TULLN**. Roughly 25km northwest of Vienna, it's the first stop for boats heading up the Danube (see box, p.171) and has a history that dates back to its foundation as the **Roman** fort Comagena. Its main claim to fame today, however, is as the birthplace of the painter **Egon Schiele** (1890–1918), who was born above Tulln's main train station, where his father was station master.

The Town

Tulln centres on a pedestrianized **shopping area** behind the Rathaus, but most points of interest lie north, by the banks of the Danube, where a path leads



through a pleasant strip of parkland. Just north of the Hauptplatz is a stylishly modernized former Minorite (Franciscan) monastery. Part of it is the **Museen in Minoritenkloster** which hosts various, often very good, temporary exhibitions throughout the year – times and entry prices vary by exhibition. Also once part of the old monastery is the adjacent Baroque **Minoritenkirche**, which positively gleams with lovingly restored white Rococo stucco-work and colourful frescoes. The latter include depictions of St John of Nepomuk being thrown to his death off Prague's Charles Bridge (also featured in gold relief on the pulpit). Be sure to peek through the glass door at the church's sacristy, with its cabinets of exquisite inlaid wood. At the west end of the church is the Loretokapelle, a brick mock-up of Mary's house in Nazareth, complete with obligatory Black Madonna and Child.

North of the Minoritenkloster on the banks of the Danube the sizeable **Nibelungenbrunnen** draws attention to the area's role in the epic Niebelungenlied (see p.178). Here, in oversized majesty, Kremhild (aka Gudrun) meets Etzel (aka Attila the Hun) before they and their respective retinues head off to watch over some flamboyant martial games – jousting and the like – in the Tullnerfeld, arranged by Etzel to boast his power. Kremhild and Etzel's encounter here is also seen as a metaphor for the meeting of East and West and their respective great powers of Germany and Hungary. The mighty bronze plays on all this symbolism, while neatly putting Tulln at the centre of it all. Note the huge tome in front of the fountains; the page on the right is blank to represent the unknown future.

A short walk east along the Danube, the town's former prison now honours Tulln's most famous son with the **Egon Schiele Museum** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 1–5pm; €5; ⓣ02272/64570, ⓦegonschiele.museum.com).

▲ Nibelungenbrunnen, Tulln

Before you set off round the exhibition, pick up the free booklet in English from the ticket desk. The ground floor is filled with reproductions of his works, and photographs from his brief life. One of the original cells has been transformed to represent the Neulengbach prison cell in which Schiele was incarcerated for 24 days in 1912. He was charged with displaying erotic drawings in a room open to children, and sentenced to three days in prison (by a judge who was himself a collector of pornography); since he had already served more than that in the course of his remand, he was immediately released. On the walls are reproductions of the watercolours he executed whilst a prisoner, mostly angst-ridden self-portraits and simple interiors of his tiny cell.

The museum's modest collection of Schiele originals consists mostly of sketches, among them numerous nudes and a ghostly *Madonna and Child* in chalk. The oil paintings to look out for are the powerfully energetic *Ruined Mill at Mühling*, painted in 1916, when Schiele worked as a clerk in a POW camp for Russian officers, and an early work from 1908 of Trieste harbour. Trieste was a favourite destination of the artist, who, as the son of a railway employee, benefited from cheap train tickets. By virtue of living his early years in Tulln's main train station, trains were a major feature of his childhood, and subject of several early drawings. By appointment with the Egon Schiele Museum you can see some of these on the first floor of Bahnhof Tulln, in **Schieles Geburtszimmer** – the room in which Schiele was born in 1890.

The town's Roman remains are clustered just downstream of the Schiele Museum and announced by the presence of the bulky riverfront **Römerturm**. An old bastion built under the emperor Diocletian (284–305 AD), it later stored precious salt supplies, and is still sometimes called the Salzturm. The **Römermuseum** on Marc Aurel-Park (April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 1–5pm; €3), houses the town's modest Roman finds, plus dioramas and a model of how Comagena might have looked. Among the artefacts are coins, military paraphernalia and a mural from a local house.

Just south from here stands the bulky Baroque **Pfarrkirche St Stephan**. The original Romanesque basilica can still be seen at ground level; particularly fine

is the west portal, which boasts thirteenth-century mug shots of the apostles. Best of all though is the well-preserved Romanesque **Karner** (Charnel House) to the east of the church, dating from 1250, with a series of weird and wonderful animals and beasts adorning the exterior walls.

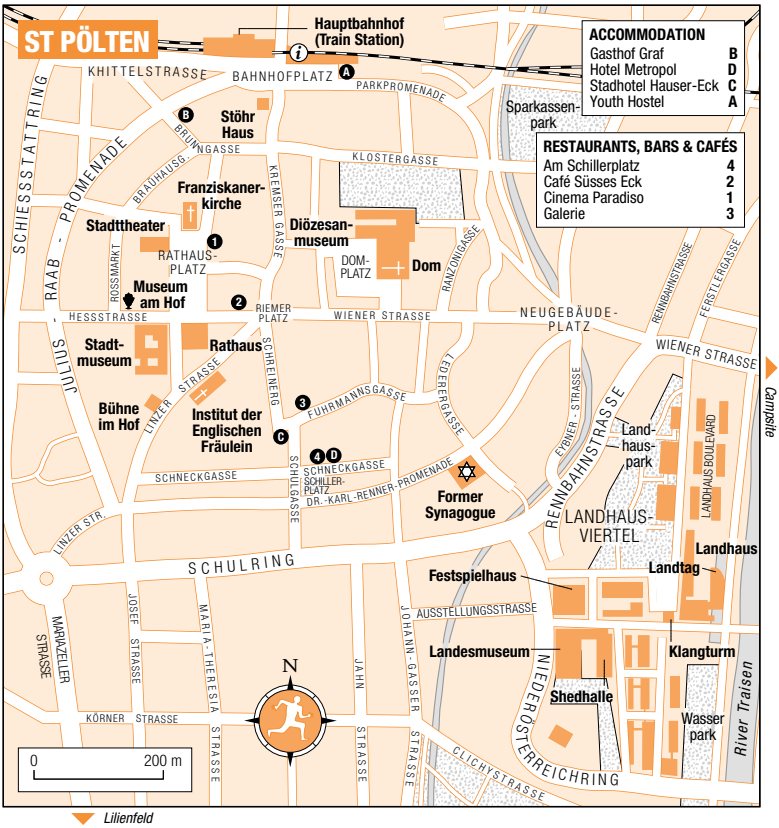
Practicalities

Fast trains from Vienna's Franz-Josefs Bahnhof take just 25 minutes to reach Bahnhof Tulln, the **main station**, some fifteen minutes' walk southeast of the town centre. S-Bahn trains take 45 minutes, but depart more frequently and terminate at Tulln-Stadt, less than five minutes' walk south of the centre. Tulln's **tourist office** (May–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 8am–3pm; ⓣ02272/67566, ⓦwww.tulln.at), on the east side of Minoritenplatz, will furnish you with a free map and can organize **private rooms**. As pleasant, inexpensive and central as any of these is the town's excellent **youth hostel**, the *Junges Hotel Tulln*, Marc Aurel Park 1c (ⓣ02272/65165, ⓦwww.noejhw.at). Other **accommodation** options include the friendly *Gasthof zum schwarzen Adler*, near the Rathaus at no. 7 (ⓣ02272/62676; 3); the swish modern rooms of the *Pension Albrechtsstuben*, Albrechtgasse 24 (ⓣ02272/64650, ⓦwww.albrechtsstuben.at) on the north side of town; and the *Niebelungenhof*, Donaulände 34 (ⓣ02272/62658, ⓦwww.niebelungenhof.info; 6), a boutique B&B overlooking the Danube with a great breakfast buffet. The town's *Donaupark* **campsite** (ⓣ02272/65200, ⓦwww.campingtulln.at) is set amidst the leisure facilities 1.5km east of the town centre.

Good **cafés** and **Gasthöfe** are easily found in and around the Hauptplatz. The best place for no-nonsense Austrian **food** is *Albrechtsstuben*, Albrechtsgasse 24 (closed Sun eve & Mon), east of Minoritenplatz, or the down-to-earth *Ratsstüberl*, Hauptplatz 19 (closed Sun), with tables looking over the main square. One of the few restaurants open late on a Sunday is *Lime*, Hauptplatz 5, which offers *Spinatnockerl*, baked potatoes, crepes and baguettes as well as the usual fare. In July and August, look out for **weekend events** – from gigs and concerts to theatre and fireworks – on the Donaubühne (ⓦwww.donaubuehne.at), the floating stage on the Danube.

St Pölten and around

Forty minutes by train west from Vienna, **ST PÖLTEN** is the biggest town in Lower Austria. With a population of over 50,000, the place is small and provincial at heart – it only really began to expand with the arrival of the railway in 1860. Today St Pölten is enjoying another period of growth as the regional capital, with a modern administrative quarter, the **Landhausviertel**, mushrooming on the banks of the Traisen, to accommodate the new regional government offices which moved here from Vienna in 1997. As well as being an easy day-trip from Vienna, St Pölten is a good base for exploring the **nearby monasteries** of Herzogenburg and Lilienfeld, not to mention Melk (see p.174), and the Mostviertel (see p.180). St Pölten is also the starting point for the **Mariazellerbahn**, the spectacular narrow-gauge railway that takes two and a half hours to wind its way south to the Styrian pilgrimage centre of Mariazell (see p.292). Steam locomotives occasionally operate; leaflets in the train station detail the current schedule.



Arrival, information and accommodation

Trains and **buses** arrive at the Hauptbahnhof, on the northeastern fringe of the city centre. From here it's a ten-minute walk to the Rathaus, location of the helpful **tourist office** (April–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 8am–5pm; ⓣ02742/353354, ⓦwww.st-poelten.gv.at).

Given the general absence of tourists in St Pölten you should have few problems finding **accommodation**. The town's youth hostel at Bahnhofplatz 1 (ⓣ02742/32196, ⓦwww.oejhv.or.at) is directly beside the train station and offers **bike hire**. Also close to the train station is the comfortable *Gasthof Graf* (ⓣ02742/352757, ⓦwww.hotel-graf.at; 5), but the one to head for is the Jugendstil *Stadthotel Hauser-Eck*, Schulgasse 2 (ⓣ02742/73336, ⓦwww.hausereck.at; 4), which has bright and cheerful rooms, a few period features in the public areas, and a cosy restaurant. Across the road is the modern business-oriented *Hotel Metropol* (ⓣ02742/70700, ⓦwww.austria-trend.at/met; 8), with its own garage and steam room. The nearest **campsite** is the *Freizeitzentrum Ratzersdorf* (ⓣ02742/251510), 3km northeast of the centre by a lake, on the banks of the Traisen. To get here head out of the centre on Wiener Strasse – follow signs to the Traisenpark, as far as the campsite signposts at the end of Dr Adolf-Schärf-Strasse.

The Altsdadt

Kremser Gasse, across the road from the train station, is the main pedestrianized street leading into town, and is lined with shops and pretty pastel-shaded Baroque facades. However, the street's most noteworthy piece of architecture is the startlingly beautiful Jugendstil **Stöhr Haus**, at no. 41. A grand curvaceous gable dominates with a relief of a snake drinking from a golden bowl held by a Greek goddess; the rest of the exterior decoration consists mainly of gilded berries and foliage. The house was designed in 1899 by Joseph Maria Olbrich, architect of the Secession building in Vienna (see p.108), for Ernst Stöhr, a local artist, poet and musician and one of the chief ideologues of the Secession movement.

Just east off Kremser Gasse, is the town's chief Baroque monument: its **Dom**. Originally built in the mid-thirteenth century as the abbey church of the neighbouring Augustinian monastery, its rather dour exterior gives no indication of the exuberant Baroque makeover inside. Jakob Prandtauer (Melk's architect – see p.174), oversaw this in the early eighteenth century, giving the interior a rich autumnal flavour; the red, orange and brown marbling combining with richly gilded stucco-work to great effect. The ceiling frescoes in the nave, mainly by Daniel Gran and Bartolomeo Altomonte, are dramatically framed by trompe l'oeil masonry. It takes time to take in the rich decoration: the pulpit, smothered in gilded drapery, reliefs and cherubs, is crowned by a Crucifixion scene; more frescoes hide in the cupolas of the side aisles; and the organ features a splendid turbaned and gilded statue of David with his harp. The only bit of the medieval cathedral to have survived is the austere rib-vaulted **Rosenkranzkapelle**, whose capitals are carved with mischievous grimacing faces and strange creatures; the chapel can be reached by an entrance in the middle of the choir stalls.

Just west of Kremser Gasse lies St Pölten's spacious traffic-free main square, **Rathausplatz**, featuring a top-quality Trinity column – an amalgam of clouds, cherubs and saints – and a frothy pink Rococo Franziskanerkirche. However, both are upstaged by the raspberry-coloured **Rathaus**, built to Renaissance dimensions but now looking distinctly ill-proportioned in its more recent Baroque dressing. The trawl through the town's history in the nearby **Stadtmuseum** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €1.60), housed in the former Carmelite monastery on Hess Strasse, is also something of a letdown. The changing art exhibitions staged in the museum's "Dokumentationszentrum für moderne Kunst" (Ⓦwww.noedok.at) are occasionally worth a look, but the biggest surprise is the Czech MiG-21 in one of the museum courtyards.

Further south, on Linzer Strasse, the frivolous Baroque **Institut der Englischen Fräulein** (aka the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) is part of the religious order founded in 1706 by the English Catholic nun and pioneer in women's education Mary Ward. The institute's light-pink palatial facade, thought to be by Prandtauer, is punctuated with fluted white pilasters and scalloped niches filled with gesticulating statuary and crowned by gilded sunbursts. Inside, the tiny Institutskirche has been beautifully restored, from its magnolia stucco-work to gilded, life-size apostles. The main body is divided into two domed spaces: the lower dome features a fresco by Altomonte; the taller one, with windows, a fresco by Paul Troger.

The former synagogue and Landhausviertel

A five-minute walk southeast of the town centre, the **former synagogue** (Mon–Fri 9am–4pm; Ⓦwww.members.magnet.at/injoest) at Dr-Karl-Renner-Promenade 22 is worth a look. Built in late-Jugendstil style in 1912,

with beautifully painted floral wallpaper decor, the synagogue was damaged by local anti-Semites during Kristallnacht (see p.573), and restored only in the 1980s. Its sheer size is testament to the prewar strength of the local Jewish community, which numbered over four hundred in St Pölten alone. The synagogue is currently home to the Institute for the History of the Jews in Austria, who use the place for talks and events. To see the inside of the building, or learn more about local Jewish history, ring the bell at the side entrance at Lederergasse 12.

Just southeast beyond the former synagogue and the busy Rennbahnstrasse is the **Landhausviertel** (also known as Regierungsviertel), the modern district that grew up on the left bank of the River Traisen in the late-1990s to accommodate the regional administration. It's difficult not to be impressed by the sheer aplomb of the project, although most of the modern, boxy architecture has a rather grey and cold feel. All large projects must have their phallic symbol, and the Landhausviertel is no exception. So, for an overview of the whole administrative district, you can ride by glass lift to the top of the 67-metre-tall **Klangturm** (Mon–Sat 9am–7pm, Sun 9am–5pm; free), a see-through iron, steel and glass "sound tower" designed by Ernst Hoffmann that transforms itself into a red- and blue-lighted beacon at night; "sound events" and other happenings regularly take place here. The shiny stainless-steel- and glass-encased **FestSpielHaus**, designed by Klaus Kada, and resembling a giant ice cube, is another building that looks best lit up at night.

By far the funkiest building in the whole complex, however, is Hans Hollein's **Shedhalle**, with its distinctive wavy glass canopy held up by giant coloured biros, and its zigzag roof. The **Landesmuseum**, Franz Schubert-Platz 5 (Tues–Sun 9am–5pm; €8; ⓣ02742/908090-100, ⓦwww.landesmuseum.net), uses the building's warehouse-style main gallery for temporary exhibitions and permanent displays on Austria's history, contemporary geography and art. In addition, there's a 3D cinema which examines the development of Lower Austria, and a collection of the region's nineteenth- and twentieth-century art. It's a bit of an odd combination – and one made even more unique by the museum's core theme of water: it draws together the various parts of the museum with mixed success.

Eating, drinking and entertainment

St Pölten has a fair spread of places to **eat** and **drink** scattered around its Altstadt, but some of the better places are just south and include *Am Schillerplatz*, Schillerplatz 1, where you'll find all the usual Austrian favorites at moderate prices. Gourmets should try *Galerie*, Fuhrmanngasse 1 (closed Sat & Sun) where the fine seasonal menu is priced at around €30 for three courses. The better of several city-centre cafés providing a mid-afternoon sugar rush is *Café Süsses Eck*, Wiener Str 15, with its wonderful selection of home-made cakes. Another good hang-out is *Cinema Paradiso*, Rathausplaz 17, an arts cinema which also serves light meals at its bistro, as well as local wines by the glass.

St Pölten has a fairly busy **cultural calendar**, especially in its state-of-the-art theatre, the Festspielhaus (ⓦwww.festspielhaus.at), whose programme is composed largely of classical concerts, operas and ballets, with infrequent forays into contemporary dance. Smaller-scale and cabaret shows appear at the Stadttheater, on Rathausplatz, and the Bühne im Hof, on Linzer Strasse (ⓦwww.bih.at).

Around St Pölten

With St Pölten's distractions limited, you might spend an afternoon visiting one of the nearby monasteries, **Lilienfeld** and **Herzogenburg**, each a short train ride away.

Lilienfeld

With its beautiful setting amidst forested alpine foothills, the Cistercian monastery in the village of **LILIENFELD**, 20km south of St Pölten, makes for a fine day-trip. From a distance you wouldn't guess it, but the abbey retains much of its Romanesque and Gothic architecture from its foundation in 1202 by Duke Leopold VI. The striking main portal of the **Stiftskirche** is a perfect example of this transitional style; sixteen slender marble columns form what the Austrians call a Trichterportal (funnel portal), whose arches are very slightly pointed, heralding the beginning of the Gothic style. Inside, the basilica features simple quadripartite vaulting and crocket capitals typical of the transitional phase. The matching black-and-gold Baroque furnishings contrast strikingly with the church's pinkish-white stone; the wooden inlay of the choir stalls is particularly fine, topped by a parade of gilded cherubs and angels. You're free to look at the church's interior through iron railings, and explore the monastery's thirteenth-century cloisters, but to walk round the church or visit the rest of the monastery – including its Baroque library and groin-vaulted medieval dormitory – you must take a rather dull 45-minute guided tour which is usually in German (Mon–Fri 10am & 2pm, Sun 2pm; €7; ⓣ02762/5242, ⓦwww.stift-lilienfeld.at).

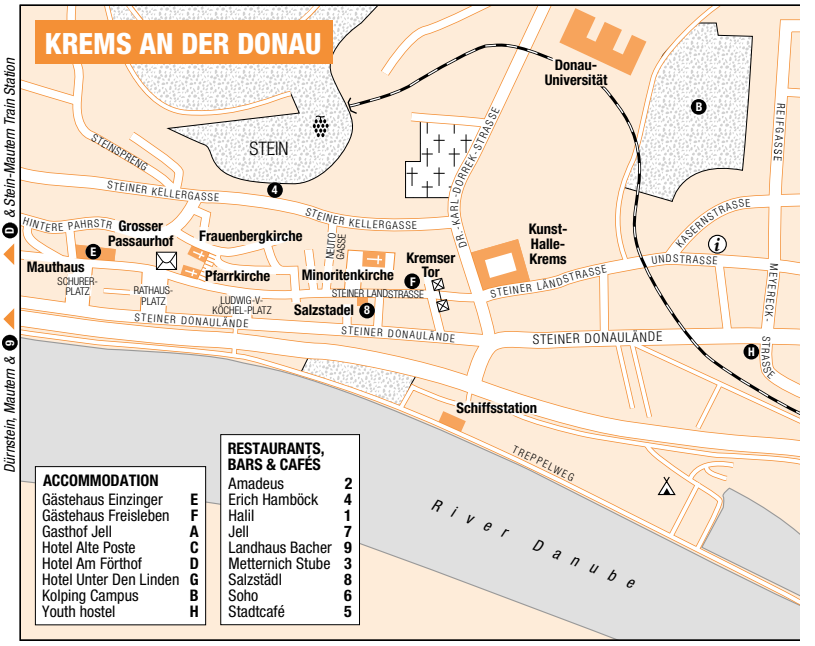
Herzogenburg

The remarkable copper-crowned tower of the Augustinian monastery at **HERZOGENBURG** rises majestically out of the flat landscape, 12km north of St Pölten. The bishop of Passau founded it in the thirteenth century, though today's scruffy pinky-brown buildings date from the early eighteenth century, when the monastery was completely rebuilt by three of Austria's greatest Baroque architects: Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Jakob Prandtauer and his cousin Josef Munggenast.

The **Stiftskirche** (€2) is the highlight of the monastery, its rich, playful, pink, grey and gold interior lined with Corinthian columns and pilasters wrapped in spiralling painted garlands, and decorated from top to bottom in trompe l'oeil frescoes, mostly by Altomonte. The nave gradually narrows, forcing your eye to focus on Daniel Gran's main altarpiece, which is crowned by a copper ducal cap and gilded sunburst. As you leave, look up at the wonderful, richly gilded, pastel-green Baroque organ case, within which you can make out a trompe l'oeil statue of David with his harp. To see the rest of the monastery's glories – including von Erlach's magnificent **Festsaal**, with its vast celestial fresco by Altomonte glorifying Passau's prince-bishops, the richly stuccoed library and the outstanding Gothic art collection – you must sign up for an hour-long guided tour (April–Oct daily 9.30am, 11am, 1.30pm, 3pm & 4pm; €7; ⓦwww.herzogenburg.at/stift), in German only.

Krems an der Donau and around

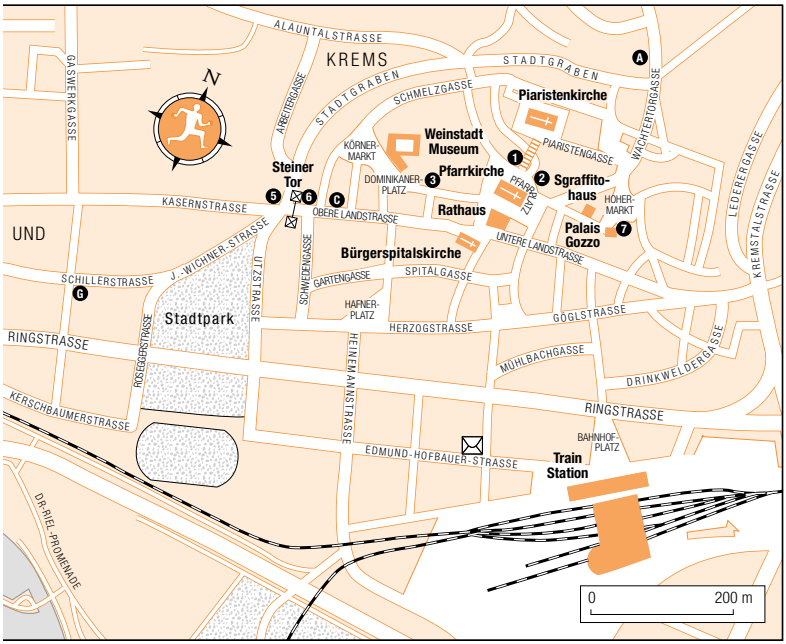
Some 75km northwest of Vienna, **KREMS AN DER DONAU** sits prettily on the terraced, vine-clad slopes of the left bank of the Danube. The site of a twelfth-century Babenberg mint, in the course of the thirteenth century



Krems became a wealthy provincial wine-growing town. The architectural fruits of this boom period, which lasted until the seventeenth century, are clearly visible in the narrow streets of the Altstadt. Devastation in the Thirty Years' War, a shift in the trade routes and a decline in traffic on the Danube led to comparatively little building work during the Baroque period. Krems remains an important Danube port, but the introduction of a postgraduate university and an arts centre have added a much-needed dose of youthful culture to what is essentially a prosperous and sedate town.

Arrival, information and accommodation

The **train** station, where **buses** also pull in, lies three blocks south of Landstrasse. The town's **tourist office** is halfway between Krems and Stein at Undstr 6 (April–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 11am–5pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 9am–6pm; ⓣ02732/85620, ⓦwww.tiscover.com/krems). If you want to stay in the centre of Krems, then consider the **private rooms** (2) on offer through the tourist office. A block south of the tourist office is the town's **youth hostel**, Ringstr 77 (April–Oct; ⓣ02732/83452, ⓦwww.oejhv.or.at), a favourite with passing cyclists. The nearest **campsite** is close by, overlooking the Danube (ⓣ02732/84455; April–Oct), though if you have your own transport head for the tiny campsite in Senftenberg (ⓣ02719/2319; April–Nov), 7km northwest of Krems, which is much quieter.



Accommodation

Gästehaus Einzinger Steiner Landstr 82 ⓣ02732/82316. A reasonably priced option situated in a converted Renaissance house in Stein, with a beautiful arcaded courtyard. 4

Gästehaus Freisleben Steiner Landstr 16 ⓣ02732/85169, ⓦwww.gaestehaus-freisleben.at. A modernized sixteenth-century house in Stein, with a pleasant inner courtyard; rooms come with en-suite facilities. 4

Gasthof Jell Hoher Markt 8–9 ⓣ02732/83952. This very comfortable guesthouse has a fine restaurant (see p.167) and is set above wine cellars amongst vineyards. 5

Hotel Alte Poste Obere Landstr 32 ⓣ02732/82276, ⓦwww.altepost-krems.at. Krems' premier Altstadt hotel is a 500-year-old building with a spacious cobbled and arcaded Renaissance courtyard, offering reasonably priced and very tastefully rustic en-suite rooms with lots of character. Closed Jan & Feb. 5

Hotel Am Förthof Förthofer Donaulände 8 ⓣ02732/83345. Biedermeier-style hotel to the west of Stein on the banks of the Danube, with a justly famous gourmet restaurant (see p.168). Traffic noise can be a problem, so choose your room carefully. 7

Hotel Unter Den Linden Schillerstr 5 ⓣ02732/82115, ⓦwww.udl.at. Perfectly located large family-run hotel in the quiet neighbourhood of Und, with a lovely shady *Gastgarten*; the cheaper rooms have shared facilities. 6

Kolping Campus Alauntalstr. 95 & 97 ⓣ02732/83541, ⓦwww.kolpingkrems.at. Clean and modern university dorm building that offers rooms to visitors in the summer months. Rooms include free Wi-Fi and kitchenettes. At €30, singles are the cheapest and best value in town. Open June–Aug. 4

Krems

Present-day **Krems** is actually made up of three previously separate settlements: Krems, Und and Stein, giving rise to the side-splitting local quip, *Krems Und Stein sind drei Städte* (Krems And Stein are three towns). Most people tend to restrict their wandering to Krems proper, though Stein is worth a look too since it has more successfully preserved its medieval character.

Krems' main thoroughfare, **Landstrasse**, is a busy, pedestrianized shopping street studded with old buildings. The finest is the **Bürgerspitalskirche**, built in 1470 on the site of the old Jewish ghetto as the town's hospital chapel. Over the doorway is the AEIOU motto of the emperor Friedrich III (see box, p.209), while the interior boasts some attractive lierne vaulting. On the opposite side of the street stands the sixteenth-century **Rathaus**, whose Renaissance origins are glimpsed in the corner oriel window facing onto Kirchengasse. Further west along the main street, at Obere Landstr 10, it's worth peeping into the exquisite arcaded courtyard of **Fellnerhof**.

To the north of Landstrasse, the quieter, hilly cobbled streets and squares boast some of Krems' finest late-medieval buildings. The largest of the squares, the Pfarrplatz, is dominated by the **Pfarrkirche**, originally a late-Romanesque church, enlarged at the end of the seventeenth century. High Baroque drama fills the interior, with trompe l'oeil masonry and gold leaf covering just about everything, including the entire pulpit and the high altar: an explosion of gilded saints and cherubs set against an enormous sunburst. The ceiling frescoes are by local artist Johann Martin Schmidt, or **Kremser Schmidt**, whose work can be found in churches and museums all over town. There's something dark and tortured about Schmidt's work that makes it compulsive viewing. Born in nearby Grafenwörth in 1718, he trained under local artisans and set up his own workshop in Krems, eschewing the cosmopolitan art scene of the capital, and it's this attachment to his provincial roots that sets his work apart from that of the more academic Austrian Baroque painters.

A covered stairway known as the **Piaristen Stiege**, on the far side of Pfarrplatz, leads up to the imposing late-Gothic **Piaristenkirche**. The church boasts some fine stellar vaulting, and several Baroque altarpieces by Kremser Schmidt, but it's worth the climb up the stairs above all for the view across town. From here, you can head east via **Hoher Markt**, perhaps the prettiest of Krems' cobbled squares, which slopes down to the wonderfully scruffy-looking **Palais Gozzo**, a honey-coloured medieval palace with a loggia on the ground floor. Round the corner, at Margarethenstr 5, is the **Sgraffitohaus**, which is smothered in sixteenth-century *sgraffito* depictions of medieval frolicking and feasting.

West of Pfarrplatz lies the **Weinstadt Museum** (March–Nov Wed–Sat 10am–6pm, Sun 1–6pm; €4; ⓦwww.weinstadtmuseum.at), atmospherically located in the former Dominican monastery. The museum amounts to little more than a mildly diverting trot through the history of the town and, in particular, its viticulture. However, you do get the chance to look around the thirteenth-century monastery, whose cloisters feature unusual zigzag trefoil arcading, and whose church – now used for temporary exhibitions – is refreshingly free of Baroque clutter and retains remnants of its original medieval frescoes. The museum also allows you to take a closer look at some of Kremser Schmidt's artworks and sculptures.

Und

The old medieval town of Krems officially terminates at the strange **Steiner Tor**, a monstrously belfried fifteenth-century town gate, flanked by two cone-capped bastions. West of it is the district of **UND** which offers little reason to pause, unless you want to visit the town's tourist office (see p.164), in the former Capuchin monastery, or visit the so-called **Kunstmeile** (ⓦwww.kunstmeile-krems.at), or art-mile.

Its most high-profile venue, the vast **Kunsthalle-Krems** (daily 10am–6pm; entrance fee varies with exhibitions; ⓦwww.kunsthalle.at), hosts major

modern art exhibitions, and stages events in the nearby Minoritenkirche (see below) on Friday and Saturday evenings. Opposite is the **Karikaturmuseum** (daily 10am–6pm; €9; Ⓦwww.karikaturmuseum.at), with its unruly zigzag roof. Designed by Gustav Peichl, an Austrian cartoonist whose alias is IRONIMUS, the museum puts on a rolling programme of exhibitions featuring caricatures, cartoons and other satirical visual media. Opposite, in **Factory** (daily noon–4pm; free) you may catch an artist in residence at work as well as temporary exhibitions, while back beside the Karikaturmuseum**, Artothek** (Tues–Sun 2–6pm; free) is a commercial art lender. Just north of the Kunstmeile, on the campus of the Donau Univerisität, the **Österreichische Filmgalerie** (Mon–Fri 2–6.30pm, Sat & Sun 11am–6.30pm; €8; Ⓣ02732/908000, Ⓦwww.filmgalerie.at) provides an interesting low-down on Austrian film. A **combined ticket** (€11) allows entrance to the Filmgalerie, Kunsthalle and Karikaturmuseum and is available at any of the three.

Stein

The **Kremsor Tor**, ten minutes' walk west of the Steiner Tor, confusingly, signals the beginning of **STEIN**. Stein is much quieter than Krems, and really does feel like a separate town, its narrow main street, **Steiner Landstrasse**, a sequence of crumbling old Renaissance facades with beautiful arcaded courtyards and small cobbled squares that face onto the Danube. The first church you come to is the impressive thirteenth-century shell of the **Minoritenkirche**, whose high-vaulted, late-Romanesque interior was once used as a tobacco warehouse and now stages art exhibitions, organized by the Kunsthalle-Krems. At the southern end of Minoritenplatz stand two sixteenth-century **Salzstädel** (salt barns), sporting the distinctive red-and-white quoins, or cornerstones, that are characteristic of many of Stein's old buildings.

Further along Landstrasse, the Pfarrhof stands out due to its rich Rococo stucco-work, followed shortly afterwards by the Gothic **Pfarrkirche**, which sports a classic Baroque onion dome, and some finely carved choir stalls but is otherwise fairly undistinguished. Steps round the east end of the church climb sharply to the fourteenth-century **Frauenbergkirche**, now a chapel dedicated to the Austrians who died in the war. From here, you get a great view across Stein and the Danube to the domes of the hilltop monastery of Göttweig to the south. It's worth continuing a little further along Steiner Landstrasse to appreciate Stein's two other winsome squares, Rathausplatz and Schürerplatz, and its remarkable parade of Renaissance houses: in particular, the **Grosser Passauerhof**, with its half-moon battlements, and the **Mauthaus**, which boasts faded trompe l'oeil frescoes.

Kremser Schmidt lived in the prettily gabled Baroque house close by the squat **Linzer Tor**, which marks the western limit of the old town of Stein. If you're heading back to Krems, the backstreet of Hintere Fahrstrasse provides an interesting alternative to Steiner Landstrasse.

Eating and drinking

Without doubt, one of the best **places to eat** is in Krems at *Jell*, Hoher Markt 8–9 (closed Sat & Sun evenings & Mon), a seriously *gemütlich* rustic place, with imaginatively prepared food – like the spicy bratwurst with lasagne (€9) – and excellent wine from their own nearby vineyards. The Turkish-run *Halil*, Pfarrplatz 8 (closed Tues), serves decent pizza and pasta, and the sushi sets and bento boxes at the stylish, minimalist *Soho*, Obere Landstr 36, make for a pleasant change from Austrian cuisine. If you're in Stein, simple *Salzstädl*

(closed Wed), in the house of the same name, is a convenient fuelling point and good for a quick schnitzel; *Hotel am Förthof* is the more formal and expensive alternative and offers a set six-course evening menu (€45 including wine), which changes regularly. The most celebrated **gourmet restaurant** in the vicinity is the even pricier *Landhaus Bacher* (☎02732/82937; closed Mon & Tues) just over the river in Mautern, which offers a six-course meal chosen from a seasonal menu. They use local produce where they can and even produce a cookery book of local dishes.

The *Stadtcafé*, on Südtirolerplatz, overlooking the Steiner Tor, is the town's most Viennese **café**. For local wine and traditional lunchtime food, head for *Metternich Stube* (closed Sun), Schlüsselamtsgasse 6. On a warm summer evening it's worth heading out of town to one of the numerous Heurigen in the backstreets of Stein: one of the more central is *Erich Hamböck*, Kellergasse 31. The presence of a university ensures the survival of several hip **drinking** holes: try *Amadeus*, Pfarrplatz 11, where you can play pool until 4am.

Stift Göttweig

As you walk around the upper reaches of Krems, Und and Stein, you're repeatedly treated to tantalizing glimpses of **Stift Göttweig** (June–Sept 9am–6pm; Oct–May 10am–6pm; ⓦwww.stiftgoettweig.or.at), the palatial hilltop Benedictine monastery some 5km south of the Danube. The original monastery, founded by the Bishop of Passau in the eleventh century, was destroyed by fire in 1718; the imposing Baroque complex you see today is the partial realization of an even more grandiose plan by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt. The basic price of admission (€2.50) gives you access to the central courtyard of the monastery where the pastel-pink **Stiftskirche** overlooks manicured lawns. The church's Tuscan loggia, flanked by two symmetrical square towers, adds a Palladian touch to the unfinished exterior. Inside, the church is a bit of a mess: Gothic in scale, clumsily converted to Baroque, and then given a dubious pink-and-blue colour scheme in the nineteenth century. The richly gilded Baroque furnishings are the most attractive feature, particularly the inlaid choir stalls, topped by gilded filigree work, and the main altarpiece, flanked by turquoise and gold barley-sugar columns. Note too, the surviving, but thoroughly upstaged, medieval stained-glass windows above the main altar.

The full price of admission to the monastery complex (€7) gives you not only entry to the Stiftskirche, but also to any temporary exhibitions and, most importantly, the **Kaiserstiege** (Imperial Staircase), Göttweig's most celebrated Baroque masterpiece. Light and airy, Hildebrandt's staircase – up which Napoleon is alleged to have ridden his horse – boasts spectacular views north to Krems and is lined with pilasters featuring wonderful atlantes, wrestling with their togas, in the place of capitals, and niches containing urns, symbolizing the twelve months, and statues representing the four seasons, all by Kremser Schmidt. Completed in just four months, the ceiling fresco by Paul Troger glorifies the emperor Karl VI, who looks slightly ludicrous in the guise of the sun-god Apollo in his heavenly chariot. The best of the rest of the state rooms, which host changing exhibitions taken from the abbey's treasury and art collection, is the **Altmannsaal**, the former banqueting hall, in which feasting guests would have been observed in turn by the guests partying on the trompe l'oeil balcony of the *Wedding at Cana* ceiling fresco.

If you want a guided **tour in English**, you need to book in advance (daily 11am & 3pm; €2; booking ☎02732/85581-231). To get to the monastery, you can either catch an infrequent **bus** from Krems, or the **train** to Klein-Wien (every 2hr; 10min), from which it's a stiff, but pretty, kilometre-hike through the woods. The *Stiftsrestaurant*, in the grounds of the monastery, serves traditional

food and has a terrace looking north to the Danube; down in Klein-Wien, the classy inn *Landgasthof Schickh* (☎02736/7218, ⓦwww.schickh.at; 4), next to the train station, has a rather more adventurous (and expensive) menu, featuring lobster and crayfish. Less exciting are its gloomy dark-wood guestrooms, though they're clean and comfortable enough.

Loisium

Vineyards roll across the landscape in every direction around Krems, and one way to appreciate them is by bike, exploring minor roads and the cheerful *Heuriger* in most villages. But the best place for an entertaining insight into winemaking is **Loisium** (April & Nov daily 10am–7pm; May–Oct daily 10am–8pm; Dec–March Fri–Sun 10am–7pm, last entry 5.30pm; €11.50, ☎02734/2372, ⓦwww.loisium.at), the slick, hi-tech visitor centre of a local vintner family in the village of **LANGENLOIS**, 13km north of Krems and served by frequent buses.

Clad in gleaming aluminium armour, Loisium's stunning visitor centre offers **self-guided audio tours** which include the wine cellars themselves, a furnished 1920s farmhouse preserved as a remnant of traditional winemaking, and the modern production line. The tour ends with a complimentary tipple in the vineyard shop, most likely a glass of Grüner Veltliner, the most popular local grape. To prolong your visit in considerable style, **stay** in the *Loisium Hotel* (☎02734/771000, ⓦwww.loisiumhotel.at; 9), next door to Loisium, which shares the same architect and has a chic spa. The top-class **restaurant** serves mainly locally reared or grown items, with a fantastic selection of local wines.

Schloss Grafenegg

Commanding the fertile plain of Krems 10km east of Krems, **Schloss Grafenegg** (mid-April to Oct Wed–Sun 10am–5pm; 5; ☎02735/5500, ⓦwww.grafenegg.at), is a neo-Gothic fantasy castle set in a mature, wooded English-style park. The current building was designed by Leopold Ernst in the mid-nineteenth century, with only a single tower, the Schwedenturm, and the basic castle layout, with its dry moat, the only reminders of the old medieval seat. The new Schloss is all pristine cream-coloured mock-crenellations, stepped gables and fiendish-looking gargoyles. The interior is a venue for often engaging temporary exhibitions, which also allow you to look inside this slightly vulgar but immaculately constructed aristocratic pile.

The first place to head for is the **Schlosskapelle**, a perfectly restored neo-Gothic chapel vibrantly decorated in cobalt blue, its stalls bristling with pinnacles and filigree work (the winged altar is actually late fifteenth-century, as are the painted panels on the walls). Decadent and expensive fun reigns in the state rooms of the **Prunkräume**, in the form of heavy wood furnishings, incredible strapwork ceilings and splendid fireplaces. Don't miss the ceramic and marble bathroom, or the wonderful glassed-in gallery, overlooking the grounds, with its incredible painted ceiling: artichoke-like pendants and mischievous elvish creatures lie below the brackets. The **Herrensalon** – a favourite for weddings and functions – features lots of heavy-handed gilded wood furnishings, and an underlit ceiling with angels and armoured figures leaping from the beams brandishing lances.

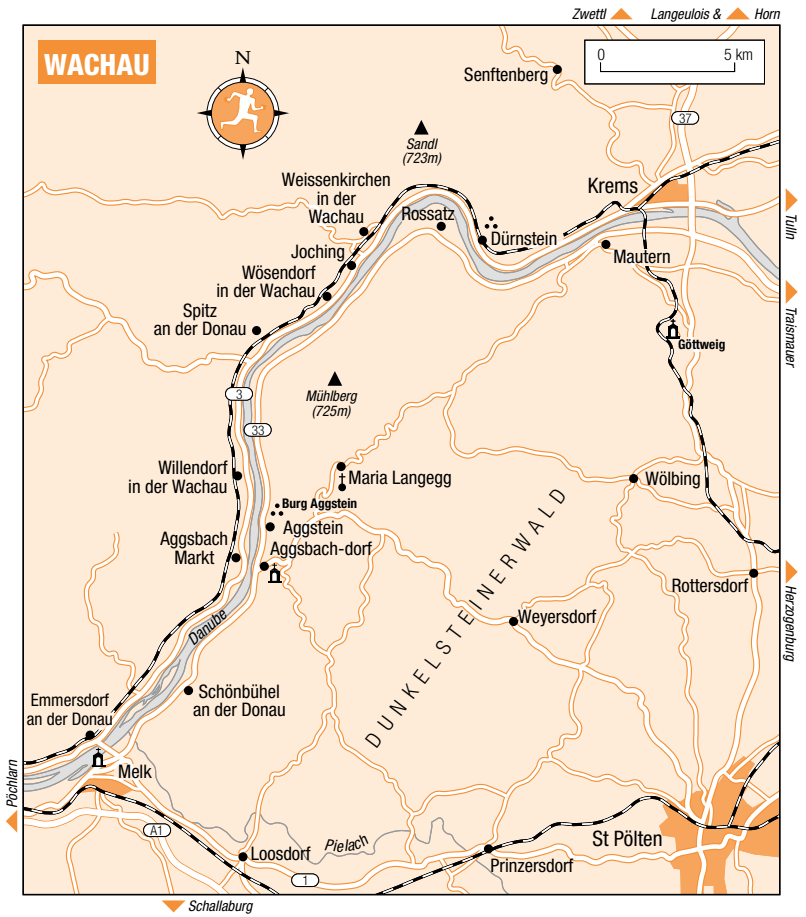
The extensive **grounds** are informally laid out, feature some fairly exotic trees and are perfect for a **picnic**. Alternatively, you can eat in some style at the pricey *Zur Taube* **restaurant** in the old riding school. Several other outbuildings have been converted into the luxurious **hotel**, *Schloss Grafenegg* (☎02738/2616,

Ⓦwww.moerwald.at; 9). By public transport, the best way to reach Grafenegg is to catch a frequent **train** from Krems to Wagram-Grafenegg, a train station 2km northeast of the Schloss.

The Wachau

Krems marks the beginning of the most picturesque, tortuously winding stretch of the Danube, known as the **Wachau**. Vine-bearing, ruin-encrusted hills roll down to the river on both sides, and in spring the banks are a mass of apricot blossom. Marking the upstream end of the Wachau is Melk, arguably Austria's most spectacular monastery (see p.174). Inevitably, given the above attractions, the Wachau itself – less than 40km in length – is by far the most touristy bit of Lower Austria, but deservedly so and rarely to enough to compromise it.

To really appreciate the joys of the Wachau, you need to travel slowly, preferably by bike, boat or train, rather than by car. Bikes are by far the most popular



A Danube Cruise

On Saturdays and Sundays, from mid-May to late September, the DDSG or Donaudamfschiffahrtsgesellschaft (ⓦ www.ddsg-blue-danube.at) run a daily **boat** up the Danube from Vienna to Dürnstein and back again. It leaves from Vienna's Reichsbrücke at 8.35am, calling at Tulln and Krems in either direction, arriving at Dürnstein at 2.30pm for a two-hour stop before returning to Vienna for 9pm. A one-way ticket for the whole length costs €19.50; a return €26.50. Note that a boat launch is Schiffsstation in German.

mode of transport for visitors of all ages, with a well-marked **cycle path**, the Donauradweg, linking all the villages north of the river. A single-track rail line also hugs the northern bank, stopping at every village along the way. Finally, there are frequent sailings along this stretch of the **Danube**; for more details pick up a leaflet from one of the tourist offices. Although there are no bridges over the river between Mautern and Melk, there are numerous little boats, known as *Rollfähren,* attached to high wires stretched across the Danube, which carry cars, bicycles and pedestrians from one side of the river to the other.

Dürnstein

The tiny, walled town of **DÜRNSTEIN**, 9km upstream from Krems, is probably the most photographed spot in the Wachau, thanks to the beautiful ice-blue and white Baroque tower that overlooks the river. Its one other great claim to fame is that the English king Richard the Lionheart was imprisoned in the castle above the town, and escaped thanks to the perseverance of his minstrel, Blondel (see box, p.172). This has guaranteed a steady trickle of (particularly English-speaking) tourists since tourism first began, and is now fairly shamelessly exploited by the town.

Dürnstein's pretty little main street, Hauptstrasse, is peaceful and pedestrian-friendly. To get to the **Stiftskirche** (April–Oct daily 9am–6pm; €2.40), in the former Augustinian monastery, head south off Hauptstrasse, past the ruined thirteenth-century Franciscan nunnery, to Klosterplatz. Once you've bought your ticket, cross the rather nasty mustard-and-grey main courtyard, and turn left through the ornate ceremonial portal, whose obelisks, symbolizing eternity, are echoed in the church's trademark main tower. The church's vaulting is adorned with delicate, plain white stucco reliefs of scenes from the New Testament, while the side altars include two macabre clothed skeletons in glass coffins. The chancel is particularly richly decorated, the high altar featuring an unusual tabernacle, with a large golden globe embellished with reliefs. For a closer look at the famous tower, walk through the exhibition on the Augustinian order, in the west wing of the main courtyard, to the terrace overlooking the river.

The **Burgruine**, in which Richard is alleged to have been kept prisoner, is a stiff fifteen-minute climb up the steps that lead off beside the Steiner Tor. Founded in the eleventh century, it was trashed in 1645 during the Thirty Years' War by the passing Swedish army, and is now nothing to shout about. However, the view from the top is quite stunning: the richly decorated Stiftskirche tower perfectly contrasting with the deep green foliage of the south bank of the river, with Göttweig and Weissenkirchen both visible in the distance.

Practicalities

The **train station** and **bus stop** are just east of the Altstadt; close by is the **tourist office** (mid-April to mid-May & late Sept to mid-Oct Mon–Sat 1–6pm;

The kidnapping of Richard the Lionheart

After the successful recapture of Acre (now Acco in Israel) in 1191, during the Third Crusade, the English **King Richard I**, **the Lionheart**, and the French King Philip II upset several of their fellow crusaders by sharing the spoils between them, leaving nothing to those who had been fighting outside the city for up to two years before the kings' arrival. And when the Babenberg Duke Leopold V tried to raise his own standard and lay a claim to some of the booty, Richard uprooted the Austrian flag and threw it into a ditch. It was an action he lived to regret, for on his way home, the following year, he was shipwrecked in the Adriatic, and forced to travel incognito across Babenberg territory. Despite growing a beard and travelling under a false name, Richard attracted attention to himself on several occasions, by his good looks, by throwing his money around carelessly, and by the splendour of his gloves. He was eventually arrested at an inn in Erdberg (now a suburb of Vienna), imprisoned in Dürnstein and ransomed by Leopold.

Here the tale falters and legend takes over, as Richard's loyal French minstrel, Blondel, wanders through the land looking for his master. Having made it to Dürnstein, Blondel, according to one version of the tale, "called to mind a song which they had made between them two and which no one knew save the king". On hearing the tune, Richard joined in, and Blondel returned to England to break the news. Two English knights then arrived, paid the ransom and delivered Richard back to England, where he got a distinctly cool reception from his brother John, who had already announced his death. Some chroniclers even suggest that it was at Dürnstein that Richard got his nickname "Lionheart". So the story goes, a hungry lion was set loose on the king after it was discovered that he had seduced the daughter of the jailer. Undaunted, Richard wrapped his cloak around his arm and thrust it down the lion's throat, tore out its heart and ate it.

In the end, though, it was Richard who had the last laugh in his feud with Leopold. He got his revenge by complaining to the pope, who promptly excommunicated Leopold for harming a "Soldier of Christ". As if that weren't enough, poor Leopold fell off his horse a few days later and broke his leg in such a way that it needed amputating. No surgeon was willing to do the job, so Leopold himself took an axe to it and chopped it off in three blows. Unfortunately, it was too late, and Leopold died before he could make it up with the Vatican.

mid-May to late Sept Mon–Sat 11am–6pm; ⓣ02711/200, ⓦwww.duernstein.at), with a free phone for booking **accommodation**. The Hauptstrasse is lined with private rooms and pensions. *Fürtler Pension*, Hauptstr 26 (ⓣ02711/252; 3) is a lovely fifteenth-century *sgraffitoed* building with an inner courtyard and en-suite rooms. You can also stay in considerable luxury at the excellent, family-run *Hotel Sänger Blondel* (ⓣ02711/253; 6), a pretty wisteria-strewn villa overlooking Klosterplatz, whose rooms of widely varying sizes have something of a fin de siècle feel, and, at considerable cost, the town's seventeenth-century riverside *Schloss Dürnstein* (ⓣ02711/212, ⓦwww.schloss.at; 9), whose antique-strewn rooms have all the modern amenities; there's a sauna and pool.

Food at the *Sänger Blondel* (closed Mon & Tues), where main dishes are €12 or more, is superb; *Dürnsteinerhof*, Hauptstr 9, offers simpler dishes for €7 and upwards. The *Alter Klosterkeller* (March–Oct), set in the vineyards on Anzuggasse, just east of the Altstadt, is the town's most popular *Heuriger*.

Weissenkirchen

While Dürnstein may enjoy an idyllic setting in the Wachau, the wine-producing village of **WEISSENKIRCHEN**, 6km upstream, has even more

charm and character. Set back slightly from the river amidst sloping vineyards, its narrow matrix of streets centres on a small cobbled square, overlooked by the eye-catching, pink sixteenth-century **Teisenhoferhof**. Its pretty little arcaded courtyard, hung with vines and corn on the cob, is home to an eighteenth-century winepress and the **Wachaumuseum** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €5). Amidst folk artefacts from the region and Romantic nineteenth-century landscape paintings of the Wachau, there are several works by Kremser Schmidt (see p.166), including some bacchanalian etchings and a rare self-portrait of the artist and his family. A covered stairway leads up from the square to the Gothic **Pfarrkirche**, which rises up above the town's terracotta jumble of rooftops, and was fortified against the Turks in 1531. A couple of superb Gothic statues, in particular a fifteenth-century *Pietà*, adorn the interior, and there's a tiny modern statue, *Schmerzensmann* (Grieving Man), in a niche on the south side of the church's smaller tower, sculpted in 1990 by a Bavarian priest.

The **tourist office** (April–Oct Mon–Sat 10am–noon & 3–6pm; ⓣ02715/2600, ⓦwww.weissenkirchen.at) in the Teisenhoferhof is an easy walk from the central **train** and **bus station** and has details of several pretty **places to stay**. Foremost among them is the *Raffelsberger Hof* (mid-April–Nov; ⓣ02715/2201, ⓦwww.raffelsbergerhof.at; 6), an old arcaded sixteenth-century shipmaster's house filled with antiques, and with a lovely garden out the back.

Spitz an der Donau

Six kilometres upstream from Weissenkirchen, **SPITZ AN DER DONAU**, is a larger and more disparate village. Like most in the region, nowadays it survives through a combination of viticulture and tourism. However, less than a century ago the river played a more important part in local life, through fishing and as a means of transport – a story told in detail by the **Schiffahrtsmuseum** (mid-April to Oct Mon–Sat 10am–noon & 2–4pm, Sun 10am–noon & 1–5pm; €5), in Schloss Erlahof, an old Baroque mansion, up the road to Ottenschlag. The building itself – once owned by a wine-producing monastic order – is quite something too, retaining several fancy stone doorways and fine stucco ceilings. The real centre of Spitz lies northwest of the train station up the tree-lined Marktstrasse which leads to Kirchenplatz, the meeting point of several cobbled streets. The nearby Gothic **Pfarrkirche**, with its lovely dappled roof tiles, is primarily remarkable for its outstanding parade of fourteenth-century sculptures of Christ and the apostles, set in niches along the organ loft.

Spitz's **train** and **bus station** lies between the Schiffsstation and the village centre, and offers bicycle rental. Its **tourist office** (April–Oct Mon–Sat 9.30am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 2–4pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 9–11am; ⓣ02713/2363, ⓦwww.spitz-wachau.at), just off the main road, opposite the Schiffsstation, can book **private rooms** for you. A good **hotel** in the centre is the pretty *Barock-Landhof Burkhardt* (ⓣ02713/2356, ⓦwww.barock-landhof.de; 4), on the corner of Kremserstrasse and Marktstrasse. Other choices include the family-run *Wachauerhof* (ⓣ02713/2303, ⓦwww.wachauerhof-spitz.at; 4), an old-fashioned three-storey hotel on Hauptstrasse with small but pleasant ensuites (some with balcony). The *Wachauerhof* serves up the usual good, if heavy, Austrian **food**.

Burg Aggstein and around

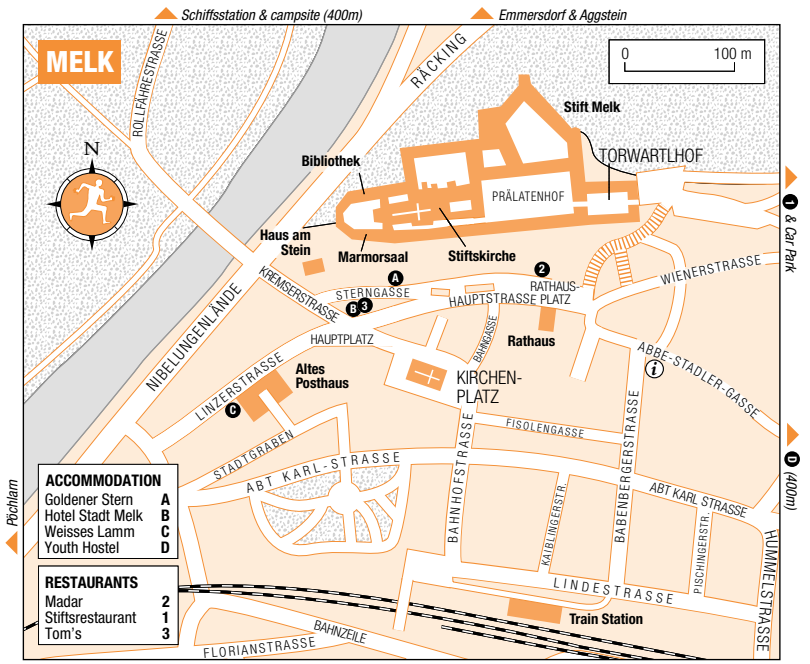
The most awesome of the numerous ruined castles that crown the hills of the Wachau is **Burg Aggstein** (daily: April–May & Sept to mid-Oct 9am–6pm; June–Aug 9am–7pm; late Oct 9am–5pm; €5), perched some 300m above the

right bank of the Danube, 6km south of Spitz (where you need to cross the river – unless you backtrack via Melk). Built literally into the rock, in the twelfth century, and sacked by (among others) the Turks, the castle was, as Patrick Leigh Fermor calls it, a "gap-toothed hold of the Künringers", a family of medieval robber-barons who were notorious local highwaymen. The place is not entirely in ruins, with large parts of the outer defences and a keep intact; they provide incredible views of the Danube. The old castle kitchens now serve as a simple summertime **café-restaurant**, with tables outside in the main courtyard.

From Burg Aggstein it's an easy three-kilometre hike – ask for directions to the trailhead at the Burg – or a 7km drive inland to the Baroque **Wallfahrtskirche** of **Maria Langegg**. It's nothing special from the outside, but you'll be pleased you came for the feast of trompe l'oeil paintings inside. Not only do the ceiling frescoes play tricks on the eye with their perspective, but the paintings along the north and south walls are framed by illusionistic side altars; ditto the impressive high altar, whose medieval *Madonna and Child* is set within a putti- and cloud-spattered sunburst. As you leave, note the delightful Rococo organ, with its delicate gold filigree and giant clock suspended between the organ pipes.

Melk and around

Strategically situated at the western entrance to the Wachau, some 40km upstream from Krems, the town of **MELK** boasts the most spectacular Baroque monastery in Austria. Dramatically perched on a high granite bluff overlooking the Danube, the palatial mustard-yellow abbey dominates the landscape from



whichever direction you approach, dwarfing the town. Initially a Roman border post and later a tenth-century Babenberg fortress, the site was handed to the Benedictines in 1089. Very little of the medieval structure survives; what draws in a staggering half a million tourists a year is the flamboyant Baroque pile built in its place in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Stift Melk

Melk's early renown was based on its medieval scholarship (discussed in some detail in Umberto Eco's monastic detective story *The Name of the Rose*) and its possession of some very valuable relics, including the body of the Irish missionary St Koloman, who was revered for his healing powers. The original **Stift Melk** (Ⓦwww.stiftmelk.at) was gutted by fire during the Turkish invasion of 1683, and lay in ruins until its ambitious abbot Bertold Dietmayr commissioned local architect Jakob Prandtauer to design a brand-new showpiece **monastery.** The project was so overblown that Dietmayr faced a rebellion by his own monks, dismayed by the affront to their asceticism, and the abbot had to prove that the monastery could afford the work before building could recommence. The abbey continues to function today, and its monastery school, with some 700 boys and girls, remains one of Austria's most prestigious academic institutions.

Visitor access to the monastery is via the main gates to the east. You can walk through several courtyards and peek through a side door at the interior of the abbey church for free, but for a proper look and to see inside the monastery, you'll need to buy a ticket from the booth at the entrance. Between mid-March and October you can visit with or without a guided tour (daily 9am–5pm; €7.50 without tour; €9.50 with – 1hr tours in German on the hour; at 2.55pm in English – call ahead for other times Ⓣ02752/255232), at other times of the year tours are compulsory (1hr tours in German & English daily at 11am & 2pm; €9.30).

The Kaisergang, Stiftsmuseum, Marmorsaal and Bibliothek

The **Kaisergang**, at the top of the Kaiserstiege, is a vast gallery – over 190m in length – designed to provide access to the 88 imperial chambers, some of which now house the Stiftsmuseum, or abbey museum. Unfortunately, the abbey's most precious trio of exhibits are kept in the treasury, and only come out on public display on October 13 (St Koloman's Day): the Melker Kreuz, a fourteenth-century cross, containing a piece of Christ's cross and studded with aquamarines, pearls and gems; the eleventh-century portable altar of Swanhild, portraying the life of Christ in walrus horn; and a thirteenth-century reliquary of the lower jaw and tooth of St Koloman. Nevertheless, the museum owns a good crop of medieval reliquaries on permanent display, including a striking example that once held St Agnes's head. Another work of art that you can be sure of seeing is the winged altarpiece from around 1502 by Jörg Breu the Elder, one of the "Danube School" that included Lucas Cranach the Elder and Albrecht Dürer. The altar panels tell the story of Christ, employing the exaggerated facial expressions that were one of the hallmarks of the Danube School.

The rest of the abbey museum can be happily passed over in order to reach the two rooms by Prandtauer that make the visit to Melk worth the effort. The first is the red-and-grey **Marmorsaal** (Marble Hall), featuring Paul Troger's superb fresco depicting the Enlightenment. Troger specialized in fresco paintings, and his masterly handling of perspective makes the ceiling appear

much higher than it really is. Despite its name, the only furnishings in the hall made from real marble are the doorframes. To get to Prandtauer's **Bibliothek** (Library), you must first take a stroll outside across the curvaceous terrace, from whose balcony you can admire the town below and the Danube in the distance. The library's ancient tomes – rebound in matching eighteenth-century leather and gold leaf – are stacked up to the ceiling on beautifully carved shelves of aspen, walnut and oak. Despite never having been restored, Troger's colourful fresco – a cherub-infested allegory of Faith – has kept its original hue thanks to the library's lack of lighting and heating. From the library, you descend a cantilevered spiral staircase to the Stiftskirche.

Stiftskirche and the Stiftspark

The **Stiftskirche**, designed by Jakob Prandtauer in 1702 and completed after his death in 1738, occupies centre stage at Stift Melk, dominating the complex with its fanciful symmetrical towers and octagonal dome. From the balconies above the side altars to the acanthus-leaf capitals of the church's fluted pilasters, the red stucco interior drips with gold paint. The Galli da Bibiena family of Italian theatrical designers is responsible for the stunning all-gold pulpit and the design of the awesome high altar with its gilded papal crown suspended above the church's patron saints, Peter and Paul. The airy frescoes and side-altar paintings are mostly by Johann Michael Rottmayr, who, along with Troger, was responsible for importing High Baroque art to Austria from Italy.

It's impossible not to notice the grisly reliquaries in the church's side altars, some of them featuring full-scale skeletons reposing in glittering garments. However, the most hallowed bones, those of St Koloman (presumably not including his jaw), are hidden from the public inside a sarcophagus in the north transept. Beyond it lies the entrance to the **Babenbergergruft**, where the remains of the long line of Babenberg rulers were traditionally thought to have been buried. In 1969, however, the remains were exhumed and examined, after which it was concluded that only Adalbert (1018–55), Ernst (1055–75) and possibly Heinrich I (994–1018) were actually interred here.

Tickets for the monastery also cover entry to the **Stiftspark** (May–Oct daily 9am–6pm; €3), which was laid out to the east of the abbey from 1750 onwards. The western section is more formal and open, and overlooked by the Baroque Gartenpavillon – now a café – built for the monks' recreation and decorated with frescoes of exotic bucolic scenes by Johann Wenzel Bergl. To the east lies the more wooded area, perfect for a picnic, and dotted with pavilions, which play music and talking stones that quote the Bible at you.

The Altstadt

Melk's **Altstadt** is barely bigger than the monastery and, with such enormous numbers of tourists passing through, inevitably suffers from overcrowding in the summer. However, a few good-looking buildings repay a stroll around the town. Pretty painted shutters adorn the pharmacy, next door to the **Rathaus**, and there are a couple of dinky turrets on the old bakery at the corner of Sterngasse, but the most attractive structure is the **Altes Posthaus**, built in 1792, at Linzerstr 3–5. The facade features stucco reliefs of horses' heads, agricultural tools, an eagle holding a post horn in its beak and so on, while the roof balustrade is dotted with urns spouting golden cacti and, as its centrepiece, a double-headed crowned eagle. For a glimpse of old Melk that few visitors see, seek out the vine-covered **Haus am Stein**, set back in its own courtyard behind Kremser Strasse.

Practicalities

Melk's **train station** is at the head of Bahnhofstrasse, which leads directly into the Altstadt. If you're travelling by train along the other bank of the Danube, the nearest station is Emmersdorf an der Donau, a three-kilometre walk from Melk. The **tourist office**, Babenbergerstr 1 (April & Oct Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 10am–noon; May, June & Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 4pm–6pm; July & Aug Mon–Sat 9am–7pm, Sun 10am–noon & 4pm–6pm; ⓣ02752/52307410, ⓦwww.melk.gv.at), can book **private rooms** for you, though most are out of the centre. Melk's **HI hostel** is just ten minutes' walk east of the tourist office, at Abt Karl-Str 42 (reception open daily 4–9pm; ⓣ02752/52681, ⓦwww.jungehotels.at/melk; March–Nov). A similar distance in the opposite direction is the town's **campsite**, *Camping Fährhaus* (ⓣ02752/53291), adjacent to the Schiffsstation on the Danube.

Most folk come to Melk on a day-trip, so **hotel** prices, even in the Altstadt, are surprisingly reasonable. The *Goldener Stern*, Sterngasse 17 (ⓣ02752/52214; ❷), offers clean doubles with shared facilities, and serves reliable pub food on a pleasant terrace, while the *Weisses Lamm*, Linzerstr 7 (ⓣ02752/54085; ❷), has simple rooms with shower and toilet. Rooms at the back of the plush *Hotel Stadt Melk*, Hauptplatz 1 (ⓣ02752/52475, ⓦwww.tiscover.com/hotel-stadt-melk; ❺), have views onto the abbey, and all are fully en suite; the hotel also has the town's finest **restaurant** *Tom's*, and a sauna. Other places to eat include the family-run *Madar* café-restaurant (closed Wed) on Rathausplatz, and the vast *Stiftsrestaurant* (mid-March to mid-Nov) up near the abbey car park.

Schloss Schallaburg

Schloss Schallaburg (May–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–6pm; ⓦwww.schallaburg.at; €8), 4km south of Melk, is a popular day-trip: you can even get a **Kombi-Karte** (€13.60) covering entry to both the castle and Stift Melk. Part ruined medieval keep, part Renaissance palace, the building is a strange hybrid. Its most celebrated treasure is the unusual and strikingly

▲ Schloss Schallaburg

beautiful terracotta arcading in the **Grosser Arkadenhof**. Each pillar is richly decorated with atlantes and caryatids, each spandrel with cartouches, and each keystone with grotesques, while slightly comical busts emerge from along the entablature. Unfortunately, nothing else in the Schloss quite competes with this sixteenth-century Italianate masterpiece, though its temporary exhibitions are often excellent. Buses to Schallaburg are pretty infrequent, however; hiring a bike from Melk station is more sensible.

Nibelungengau

The Danube Valley west of Melk, often called the **Nibelungengau,** can't hope to compete with the scenic magic of the Wachau, though the hillier north bank boasts the spectacularly sited pilgrimage church of **Maria Taferl**, and numerous other riverside castles. The noble pile receiving the greatest number of visitors is **Artstetten**, resting place of the ill-fated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914. The only worthwhile stop along this stretch of river is **Pöchlarn**, the pretty little town where Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980) was born. With regular train connections, and boats connecting the town with Klein Pöchlarn on the north bank, Pöchlarn makes a good base for exploring the Nibelungengau if Melk doesn't appeal.

Nibelungenlied

The stretch of the Danube between Melk and Persenbeug is known as the Nibelungengau, after the **Nibelungenlied**, the great epic German poem, written around the end of the twelfth century, and based on Scandinavian legends about the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom by the Huns in the fifth century AD.

Nibelung himself was the mythical king of Nibelungenland (Norway), who, along with his twelve paladins, all giants, guarded a mythical hoard of treasure. Siegfried, prince of the Netherlands and hero of the first part of the poem, kills Nibelung and the giants and gains possession of the hoard, which he gives as a dowry to his new wife Kriemhild of Burgundy (aka Gudrun). Siegfried then helps Kriemhild's brother, Gunther, King of Burgundy, to gain the hand of Brunhild of Iceland. This is no simple task as Brunhild has announced that she will only marry a man who can beat her at the javelin, shot put and long jump. Siegfried, who rather handily possesses a cloak of invisibility, helps Gunther to cheat and therefore marry Brunhild. After the marriage, Kriemhild tells Brunhild how Siegfried aided Gunther. Brunhild, furious, gets Gunther's retainer (and the big baddy of the poem), Hagan, to murder Siegfried, grab the treasure, and bury it in the Rhine. The plan is to recover it later, but by the end of the poem everyone's dead, so the treasure is lost for ever. The second part of the poem tells of Kriemhild's subsequent marriage to Attila the Hun (known as Etzel in the poem). She invites the Burgundians en masse to the Hunnic court, where Hagan, rather rudely, kills Etzel's son. Kriemhild then decapitates Gunther and Hagan with her own hands, only to be killed by Old Hildebrand of Bern, who is horrified by her behaviour.

Thanks to Wagner, whose *Ring* cycle is based on the tale, most people associate the myths with the Rhine Valley, though much of the action, in the second part of the poem, takes place along the Danube, as first Kriemhild, and then Gunther, Hagan and the rest of the Burgundians, travel to meet Etzel. The topography in the poem is pretty vague, but Pöchlarn (dubbed Nibelungenstadt by the local tourist authorities) features as the residence of Margrave Rüdiger, who puts on a four-day feast for Kriemhild and her entourage "in colored tents all over the meadows", and escorts her to her meeting with Etzel, downriver at Tulln, where he "allowed not the king to caress his bride in secret".

Pöchlarn

PÖCHLARN, 10km upstream from Melk, is a pretty little walled town of winding, narrow streets, which features in the *Nibelungenlied* though it's more famous nowadays as the birthplace of **Oskar Kokoschka**. At Regensburgerstr 29, to the west of the Altstadt, stands the house in which the artist was born in 1886 – it was not, in fact, the family home, but a sawmill belonging to one of his uncles – now the **OK-Dokumentation** (May–Oct daily 9am–5pm; €5). The courtyard displays reproductions of the artist's most famous works, many of which are scattered around the art museums of the world, including the Belvedere in Vienna (see p.113). The museum puts on temporary exhibitions from its own collection, mostly little-known but interesting drawings, sketches and watercolours, and also has an exhibition (in German only) on Kokoschka's long, prolific life. Perhaps the most startling exhibit is the bullet removed from the artist's skull by surgeons during World War I. Kokoschka left Austria before the end of the war, and thereafter returned only sporadically to his homeland. During the 1930s, he lived in exile in Prague, and later London, eventually becoming a British citizen in 1947. He died at the age of 94 in Montreux, Switzerland.

The town's **tourist office,** Regensburgerstr 11 (Mon–Fri 7am–noon, Thurs 1–3pm; ⓣ02757/2310, ⓦwww.poechlarn.at), will book **private rooms** (❷–❸), or you could opt for an en-suite room at *Hotel Moser* (ⓣ02757/2448, ⓦwww.hotelmoser.at; ❺), opposite the train station, which also has a reasonable restaurant.

Schloss Artstetten

While the rest of the Habsburg dynasty lie in Vienna's Kaisergruft, the **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** (1863–1914) is buried in a private chapel beneath the majestic, multi-onion-domed **Schloss Artstetten** (April–Nov daily 9am–5.30pm; €6.50; ⓦwww.schloss-artstetten.at), 10km west of Melk, on the opposite bank of the river. The reason for this lies in the archduke's morganatic marriage to Sophie Chotek, which he embarked upon in 1900 against the wishes of his uncle, the emperor Franz-Josef I. As crown prince, and heir to the imperial throne, Franz Ferdinand was expected to marry a princess, not a mere countess like Sophie, who ranked lower than more than thirty archduchesses (she had even been lady-in-waiting to one of them). As a result, Sophie was forbidden from accompanying her husband to official court functions, including the court opera and theatre; at official banquets, her place was laid, but remained unoccupied. This rigid and humiliating court protocol meant the archduke and his family spent as little time as possible in Vienna, preferring their Bohemian properties and, to a lesser extent, Schloss Artstetten.

Apart from the wonderful majolica-clad bathroom (*c.*1869), very little of the chateau's original decor remains. Instead, the rooms now house the exhaustive **Franz Ferdinand Museum**, which includes the archduke's *Schussliste*, cataloguing the more than 270,000 wild animals he bagged – everything from pigeons to tigers – during his globe-trotting hunting expeditions (in 1911 alone, he clocked up 18,709 kills). Naturally the museum carefully documents the archduke's final hours in Sarajevo in 1914, when he and his wife, who was allowed to accompany her husband on an official visit for the first time as a special favour, were assassinated by Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip. In the main courtyard, there's a replica of the Gräf & Stift convertible in which they were killed (the original is in Vienna; see p.116). On hearing of the tragedy, the

emperor Franz-Josef is alleged to have said: "God will not be mocked. A higher power has put back the order I couldn't maintain." He refused Franz Ferdinand and his wife burial in the Kaisergruft; now visitors are permitted a brief glimpse of their modest marble sarcophagi in Artstetten's subterranean crypt.

Artstetten is hard to get to without your own wheels. The nearest **train station** is 3km away in Klein Pöchlarn, which is linked by ferry to Pöchlarn, on the south bank (see p.179). You can picnic in the chateau's English-style gardens, or enjoy a reasonably priced **meal** at the excellent *Schlossgasthof-Landstetter* (☎07413/8303; ③), which also has large en-suite **rooms** above it.

Maria Taferl

It's impossible to miss the Baroque **Wallfahrtskirche** of **Maria Taferl**, on its magnificently ostentatious position high above the Danube, 5km upstream of Klein Pöchlarn. The church gets its name from the *Taferl* (board), containing a crucifix, which was attached to an oak tree that once stood on this spot. In 1633, so the story goes, a local farmer tried to fell the oak with an axe, but succeeded only in hacking both his legs to bits. At this point, he spotted the crucifix, fell to his knees and prayed for forgiveness. His legs immediately healed and, after several further miracles and apparitions over the next thirty years, the foundation stone of Maria Taferl was laid in 1660. Today, virtually every tour group heading along the Danube pauses here, so you're unlikely to have the spot to yourself; but the effort of getting here is amply rewarded both by the stupendous views, and by the church's glorious interior – although the latter is being temporarily concealed by a heavy restoration programme to be completed in 2010, for the church's 350-year anniversary.

Although the original cruciform plan survives, the **interior** was completed in High-Baroque style by Carlo Lurago and Jakob Prandtauer. The latter is responsible for the central cupola, whose fresco, though not of the highest quality, creates a pleasing overall effect with its trompe l'oeil masonry. There's plenty of gold throughout the church, from the acanthus-leaf capitals to the filigree work on the organ and the particularly fine pulpit. There's also a **Schatzkammer** (April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; €1.50) inside the church, containing a copy of the miraculous *Pietà* carved from the original oak tree, not to mention a rain gauge made from the wedding dress of the Empress Elisabeth (1837–98), better known as Sisi and wife to Franz Joseph, while the nearby **Mechanische Krippe** (daily 9am–5pm; by donation) contains a mechanized Bethlehem scene set beneath a copy of the church.

The nearest train station to the village of Maria Taferl is 3km below the church, in the village of **Marbach an der Donau**. There are numerous places to stay in the village, but you're really better off back in Artstetten, or across the river in Pöchlarn.

Mostviertel

The southwest corner of Lower Austria – known as the **Mostviertel**, after the local cider – hides the Land's most spectacular, unspoilt scenery, dominated by the region's largest peak, the colossal **Ötscher** (1893m), which provides an impressive snowcapped backdrop as you approach from the north. The chief summer and winter resort here is **Lackenhof**, just below the Ötscher, while to the west is the **Ybbstal**, a peaceful meandering valley, once home to numerous forges, powered by the River Ybbs, and supplied with iron ore from the Styrian

town of Eisenerz (see p.296). Nowadays, the Ybbstal's economy relies on agriculture, supplemented by a modicum of tourism: good hiking and cycling routes criss-cross the region and the local tourist offices produce excellent and inexpensive maps. The most obvious base for the region is the attractive walled town of **Waidhofen an der Ybbs**, which is in easy striking distance of the impressive landmark pilgrimage church **Sonntagberg**, and the monastery of **Seitenstettenmarkt**.

One good way to see the region is from the narrow-gauge railway which winds 71km through the **Ybbstal**. Split into two sections, the **Ybbstalbahn** (Ⓦ www.ybbstalbahn.at) handles trains from Waidhofen to Lunz am See, while the spectacular **Bergstrecke** (Ⓦ www.lokalbahnen.at/bergstrecke) – the onward leg to Kienberg-Gaming over passes and high trellises – is only plied occasionally. Steam trains operate on both sections between May and September on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays; but both are vulnerable to schedule changes and repairs so check websites in advance.

Lackenhof and the Ötscher

LACKENHOF, nestling amongst meadows, 17km southeast of Gaming on the west side of the **Ötscher**, is the region's busiest resort. It's by no means an unattractive or overdeveloped village, but the chief reason for being here is to go either walking or skiing in the surrounding mountains. In **summer**, the longest and most frequent of the various chairlifts is the **Ötscherlift** (June & Oct Sat & Sun 9am–4.30pm; July–Sept daily 9am–4.30pm; €6.50 one-way; Ⓦ www.oetscher.at), 1km east of the tourist office in the district of Weitental, which takes you as far as the Ötscherschutzhaus (1420m), from which it's about an hour's hike to the summit, or back down to Lackenhof. In winter (Nov–March) the resort offers 19km of trails divided into nine runs – with something for every skill level – and day tickets priced at €29.

Lackenhof is a half-hour **bus** ride from either Lunz am See or Gaming. The **tourist office**, Käferbichlstr 14 (Mon–Fri 8am–4.30pm, Sat 9am–1pm, Sun 8am–1pm; ⓣ 07480/20020, Ⓦ www.lackenhof.at), near the Eibenkogel lift can help you find a **private room**. Alternatively, **stay** in the dorms or private rooms of the simple *Ötscherschutzhaus* (ⓣ 07480/5249; ❷), at the top of the chairlift; near the bottom of the chairlift, the *Ötscherhof* (ⓣ 07480/20081; ❸) is a comfortable but relatively inexpensive option. For a real treat, head for the *Wellness-Hotel Jagdhof* (ⓣ 07480/53000, Ⓦ www.jagdhof.at; ❻), a mini health farm where you'll be treated to delicious organic, wholefood cooking. There's also a **campsite** (ⓣ 07480/52760; open all year), behind the *Gasthof zur Ötscherwiese* – follow Käferbichlstrasse east – and a typically efficient and clean **HI hostel** (ⓣ 07480/5251, Ⓦ www.jungehotels.at/lackenhof) on the southwest edge of town.

The Ybbstal

The waters of the Ois flow from valleys around the Ötscher to become the Ybbs at the leisurely village of **LUNZ AM SEE**, 11km south of Gaming, and nestling in the northeastern end of the beech- and pine-forested **Ybbstal**. Lunz's main landmark is its superb *sgraffitoed* sixteenth-century Rathaus, known as the **Amonhaus** and decorated with a frieze featuring Jonah cheerily waving as he's swallowed by the whale. Ten minutes' walk east of Lunz, wooded mountainsides are perfectly reflected in **Lunzer See** where the main activities are swimming, rowing and sunbathing. The nearby *Gasthof Kirchenwirt* (ⓣ 07486/8203; ❷) on Kirchenplatz is a decent place to **stay**, as is *Seebach*

(☎07486/8307; ❷), a simple pension overlooking the lake on the Seepromenade, and there's a **campsite** (☎07486/8413) beside the lake. The *Seerestaurant* at the western end of the lake has a terrace overlooking the water and serves the usual Austrian staples.

Some 15km further downstream along the circuitous valley, the pretty little village of **GÖSTLING** offers the chance to stay in the rustic, vine-clad *Hotel zum goldenen Hirschen* (☎07484/2225, ⓦwww.goestling-hochkar.at/hotel-hirsch/; ❸), highly recommended for its location, friendly ambience and food, which goes beyond traditional fare.

Waidhofen an der Ybbs

Perched picturesquely high above the rushing Ybbs 32km north of Göstling, **WAIDHOFEN AN DER YBBS** is the Mostviertel's largest town and most practical base. The distinctive forest of assorted towers that dot its compact **Altstadt** are particularly striking on approaches from the north and gather around two long parallel squares – Oberer and Unterer Stadtplatz. Between them is the onion-domed medieval **Stadtturm** (May–Oct Thurs–Sun 10am–6pm; €2.60), erected in honour of a 1532 victory over the Turks. You can climb the tower to the tiny room, where a watchman lived until 1907, for great views over neighbouring spires and rooftops.

Round the corner, Oberer Stadtplatz leads to the **Stadtpfarrkirche** which reveals its fifteenth-century origins in its Gothic lierne vaulting. The winged high altar also dates from this time, and has gilded relief sculptures of the Madonna and Child, flanked by St Barbara and St Katherine. The top left panel scene celebrates the happy marriage of St Elisabeth of Hungary with Ludwig of Thüringen, but the other three detail the gruesome martyrdoms of St Agatha, who had her breasts cut off, St Katharine who was beheaded and St Ursula, who drowned in a ship, along with innumerable virgins. The church's other treasure is hidden away in the southwest corner, in the befrescoed Marienkapelle, where a high-kitsch sixteenth-century wax copy of the famous **Praguer Jesukind** (*Bambino di Praga*) poses in swaddling clothes.

Beyond the church is the striking machicolated tower of the town's **Rothschildschloss**, originally built around 1407, and only saved from dereliction in the 1880s by the Rothschild family, who employed the German Friedrich von Schmidt, architect of the Vienna Rathaus (see p.99), to create the current mock-medieval fantasy. It's now home to the tourist office and local museum, the **Heimatmuseum** (May–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; Nov–April Tues–Sat 9am–6pm; €3), which has an above-average collection, including a model of the medieval town, showing just how well fortified it was. There's a great sixteenth-century *Plagenbild*, depicting the various plagues and invasions that hit the town, from finches and grasshoppers to the Turks. Other oil paintings graphically depict the tribulations of the Napoleonic era, when Waidhofen was occupied by French troops on three separate occasions. Elsewhere, there's an interesting section on the interwar, Nazi and postwar periods, as well as the usual flora and fauna. If you've children in tow, make sure you visit the area where the kids can play with replicas of some of the traditional wooden toys on display.

Practicalities

Waidhofen's main **train station** is a fifteen-minute walk north of the Altstadt, and served by local buses. The **tourist office** (May–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; Nov–April Tues–Sat 9am–6pm; ☎07442/511255, ⓦwww.waidhofen.at) in a

new wing of the Rothschildschloss, has **private rooms** (2–3) on its books. Otherwise, try *Zum schwarzen Bären*, Ybbstorgasse 3 (Ⓣ07442/52114; 4), a comfortable and central inn, just beyond the southern end of the Oberer Stadtplatz. Beside it is the Ybbstor, a town gate, beyond which, on the east side of the Ybbs in the suburb of Zell, you'll find one of the town's choicest **accommodation options,** *Hotel Moshammer,* Kirchenplatz 3 (Ⓣ07442/54018; 6). The hotel **restaurant**, the *Zeller Weinstube* (closed Mon) is good for local specialities unless you're vegetarian, in which case try the cosy *Ybbsturm Stube*, just south of the Ybbstor, whose menu is guided by the seasons.

Sonntagberg

North of Waidhofen, the landscape opens out, with **Sonntagberg** (704m) a lone sentinal at the northern edge of the Mostviertel. Using this heavenly position to full advantage is the pale pink and white **Wallfahrtskirche**, which was begun in 1706 by Jakob Prandtauer, and completed by Josef Munggenast. Something about the basilica sets it apart from its rivals, whether it's the panoramic views from the terrace, the dizzying impact of its High Baroque interior, or its strange gargantuan emptiness outside the pilgrimage season. Grey pilasters, crowned with gilded acanthus leaves, line the nave, while every square centimetre of the ceiling vaults and central cupola is taken up with trompe l'oeil plasterwork and frescoes by Daniel Gran. The pulpit is a sculptural symphony in gold and the high altar is crowned by an equally ornate gilded baldachin. Be sure to peek into the glass coffins on either side of the nave, in which two saintly female skeletons repose in bejewelled costumes, with veils over their skulls and quills in their bony hands. The fairly luxurious *Hospiz Sonntagberg* (Ⓣ07448/339, Ⓦwww.sonntagberg.at; 5) up here can provide **food** or a **bed** for the night.

Seitenstetten Markt

If you're on a tour of Austrian monasteries, it's definitely worth detouring to **SEITENSTETTEN MARKT**, about 10km west of Sonntagberg, where you'll find the Benedictine **Stift Seitenstetten** (May–Oct daily 10am–3pm; Ⓣ07477/423000, Ⓦwww.stift-seitenstetten.at). Refreshingly, you're free to walk round the complex, much of which is now given over to the monastery's busy Gymnasium. The **Stiftskirche**'s Baroque makeover, with its slightly stomach-churning pink and grey colour scheme, is not altogether successful, though the painted biblical "wallpaper" (after sketches by Kremser Schmidt) in the chancel is interesting enough. Behind the church is the oldest part of the complex, the **Ritterkapelle**, dating back to medieval times, but currently smothered in foliaceous white stucco. But more impressive than either of the above is the **Abteistiege**, on the north side of the courtyard, a monumental staircase designed by Josef Muggenast, and decorated with playful vanilla yellow, silver grey and white stucco-work, and a vast luminous fresco by Altomonte, depicting St Benedict being led to heaven in a chariot, with allegories of the four continents looking on.

All the above sections of the monastery are open to the public without charge, but to see the rest of the complex, including the spectacular **Marmorsaal**, with its trompe l'oeil decor and colourful fresco by Paul Troger, you must join a **guided tour** (May–Oct daily 10am & 3pm; €6.50). Seitenstetten also boasts a vast **Stiftsgalerie** (Fri, Sat & Sun 2–5pm; €6.50 or €9.50 with guided tour), ranging from medieval altarpieces to modern works by the likes of Fritz Wotruba and Peter Pichl, and including paintings by Gran, Maulpertsch, Altdorfer, Dürer, and no fewer than ten pieces by Troger and 38 by Kremser

Schmidt. Opposite the main entrance to the monastery, the **Hofgarten** (mid-April–Oct 8am–8pm; free), with its rambling rose and clematis-strewn arbours and fountain, makes the perfect **picnic** spot.

The Weinviertel and Waldviertel

The huge swath of Lower Austria that lies between the Danube and the Czech border is probably the least-visited area in the whole country and considered something of a rural backwater by most Austrians. The proximity of the Iron Curtain helped to keep these sleepy agricultural districts, called the **Weinviertel** and **Waldviertel,** that way for over forty years, and certainly those who do visit appreciate the region precisely for its soporific qualities and gentle, rural charms. Lightly served by public transport, the best way to explore is definitely with your own wheels, with the fairly flat and quiet roads making cycling a particular pleasure, not least if you fancy touring some of the *Heurigen* dotted in villages in both regions. But generally, it's the rolling countryside of the **Waldviertel** that has the most to offer. Here pretty meandering valleys harbour numerous sleepy and picturesque walled towns which have changed surprisingly little over the last two hundred years. **Retz** and **Drosendorf** – both hard by the Czech border in the **Thayatal** – are probably the most attractive and have the most spectacular castles. But castles dot the **Kamptal** region too, together with renowned and exceptionally fine monasteries at **Altenburg** and **Zwettl**.

Poysdorf and Mistelbach

The northeastern corner, the **Weinviertel**, may be the country's agricultural heartland and chief wine-producing region, but its landscape is flat and largely featureless. You'll probably only find yourself here if you're heading for the Czech Republic. The road from Vienna to the Czech city of Brno (Brünn) is a particularly miserable one, with **POYSDORF** the only place of any size and far less interesting than Mikulov (Nikolsburg), 18km away on the Czech side of the border. Poysdorf's local cemetery contains a passionate memorial to 120 victims of the **Brno Death March** of May 1945, when the city's 23,000 German-speakers were forced to walk across the border, taking only what they could carry (and no money or jewellery). This violent expulsion of ethnic Germans from the Czechoslovak border regions after World War II is thoroughly explored in the fascinating **Südmährermuseum** (April–Oct Sun 2–5pm; free), housed on the top floor of the Altes Rathaus, on the main square in **LAA AN DER THAYA**, 22km west of Poysdorf, flush with the Czech border.

The Weinviertel's most unusual tourist attraction is in **MISTELBACH**, 16km south of Poysdorf, where the local **Museumszentrum** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €7; Ⓦ www.nitsch.org), on Waldstrasse, houses a museum dedicated to the works of the contemporary artist **Hermann Nitsch**. Nitsch made his name as a performance artist in the brief and violent Wiener Aktionismus art movement of the 1960s. Abstract splatter paintings, daubed with the blood and entrails of animals and sometimes even the artist himself, are characteristic of his output. Despite his uncompromising artistic stance, in the last decade or so, he has been embraced by the Austrian establishment, designing the sets and costumes for an opera at the Vienna Staatsoper and ultimately having a state-funded art gallery created in his honour. The museum puts on changing exhibitions of Nitsch's work drawn from around 150 paintings, 75 drawings and 500 photographs and videos. Look out, too, for performances (or *Aktionen*)

Coffee and cakes

Paris may have more of them, but Vienna is the spiritual home of the café or *Kaffeehaus*. Legend has it that coffee was first introduced to Vienna by a certain Georg Franz Kolschitzky, an Austrian spy who regularly penetrated the Turkish camp during the siege of 1683. When the siege was finally lifted, Kolschitzky was asked what he wanted in return for his services. He requested to be given the "camel fodder" – in actual fact sacks of coffee beans – left behind by the hastily departed Turks, and went on to open the first coffeehouse in Vienna the same year.

Kaffeehaus waiter ▲

Petits fours ▼

A Viennese institution

By the late nineteenth century the *Kaffeehaus* had become Vienna's most important social institution. It was described by writer Stefan Zweig as "a sort of democratic club to which admission costs the small price of a cup of coffee. Upon payment of this mite, every guest can sit for hours on end, discuss, write, play cards, receive his mail, and above all, can go through an unlimited number of newspapers and magazines". The *Kaffeehaus* became an informal office for its *Stammgäste* or regulars, where they could work, relax and receive clients in warmth and comfort. At certain cafés, the head waiter or *Herr Ober* could direct each customer to a certain table or *Stammtisch* depending on what subject he (or less frequently she) wished to debate.

Even today, there is still something unique about the institution that makes a visit worthwhile. While the rest of the world queues up for fast food, the Viennese *Kaffeehaus* implores you to slow down, or, as the sign in one such café says, "Sorry, we do not cater for people in a hurry". In his own time, a tuxedoed waiter will ask for your order and, for the price of a small coffee, will allow you to sit for as long as you like without asking you to move on or buy another drink. At this point, you should admire your surroundings: the high ceiling, the marble table-tops, the velvety upholstery, the bentwood coat stands, perhaps a billiard table or two. Select yourself a newspaper and – thanks to the absence of piped music and the general censure on mobiles – appreciate the timeless tranquillity of the *Kaffeehaus*.

Coffee

On average, the Austrians drink almost twice as much **coffee** as beer (more than a pint a day per head of the population). When ordering, few Viennese ever actually ask for a straight *Kaffee*, as the varieties are legion. However, whatever you order, it will come on a little silver tray, accompanied by a glass of water.

Brauner Black coffee with a small amount of milk.

Cappuccino The Austrian version of a cappuccino comes with whipped cream (*Schlagobers*).

Einspänner Small black coffee, served in a tall glass and topped with whipped cream.

Eiskaffee Iced coffee with ice cream and whipped cream.

Fiaker A coffee with a shot of rum and whipped cream.

Kaffee Crème Coffee served with a little jug of milk.

Konsul Black coffee with a spot of cream.

Kurz Viennese version of an espresso.

Mazagran Coffee served with an ice cube and laced with rum, to be drunk in one gulp.

Mélange (pronounced like the French). Equal measures of frothed milk and coffee – more of a cappuccino than an Austrian *Cappuccino*.

Milch Kaffee Large hot, frothy, milky coffee.

Pharisäer Coffee in a glass topped with whipped cream, served with a small glass of rum on the side.

Schwarzer or **Mokka** Small or large black coffee.

Türkische Coffee grains and sugar boiled up together in individual copper pots to create a strong, sweet brew.

Verlängerter Brauner or **Schwarzer** Slightly weaker than normal coffee.

▲ Café society

▲ Torten

▼ Billiards

Café Prückel ▲

Café Sperl ▼

Kaffeehaus newspaper rack ▼

Cakes

Many *Kaffeehäuser* in Vienna will have *Torten* piled high in a display cabinet, in which case you can simply point to the one that takes your fancy.

The best cafés still bake their own cakes on site, and all can be served with a helping of *Schlagobers* (whipped cream).

The box below details some of the more common choices.

Apfelstrudel Apple and raisins wrapped in pastry and sprinkled with icing sugar.

Biskuitroulade The basic roulade is a jam roll, but it comes in various other creamier versions.

Dobostorte A rich Hungarian cake made up of alternate layers of biscuit sponge and chocolate cream.

Esterházytorte Several layers of cream and sponge coated in white icing with a feather design on top.

Guglhupf Sigmund Freud's favourite, at its most basic a simple sponge cake baked in a fluted ring mould and cut into slices.

Linzertorte Essentially a jam tart made with almond pastry.

Mohnstrudel A bread-like pudding rather like an *Apfelstrudel*, but with a poppy seed and raisin filling.

Powidltascherl This is basically a Danish pastry, filled with plum jam.

Punschkrapfen More of a *petit four* than a proper slice of cake, this is a mouthful of cake filled with jam, rum and chocolate and encased in icing.

Sachertorte The most famous of the Viennese cakes – and in some ways the least interesting – a chocolate sponge cake coated in chocolate, most often with a layer of apricot jam beneath the chocolate coating.

Topfenstrudel Like an *Apfelstrudel*, but with a sweet curd cheese filling.

Zwetschgenkuchen A spongy tart dotted with halved plums.

by Nitsch's very own Orgien Mysterien Theater, which occasionally take place in Schloss Prinzendorf an der Zaya, the castle, 12km east of Mistebach, that Nitsch has owned since 1971.

Retz

The charming walled town of **RETZ**, 30km west of Laa, has as its centrepiece and showpiece a beautifully proportioned **Hauptplatz**: a sloping, cobbled rectangle lined with pastel-coloured buildings. Among them is the salmon-hued sixteenth-century **Verderberhaus**, whose castellated bulk forms a sort of gateway to the square. The town's one **Sgraffitohaus**, on the south side of the square is worth a closer look for its scenes from Greek mythology – from Narcissus to Medea – on the main facade, while the side depicts the ages of woman in decades from zero to a hundred. At the western end of the **Hauptplatz** lies the town's freestanding, suitably imposing sixteenth-century **Rathaus** (May–Oct Mon–Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 9am–4pm; €1), with its strikingly tall Renaissance tower, the **Rathauskapelle** (May–Oct daily 10.15am & 3.45pm; free), which is decorated from floor to (very low) ceiling in vibrant trompe l'oeil Rococo stucco-work and frescoes. The Rathaus is also the location of the town's labyrinthine underground **Weinkeller** (daily 10.30am, 2 & 4pm; €6.50), which can be explored in an hour and a half; tours include a tasting and meet at the tourist information opposite.

On the backstreets of Retz, the **Dominikanerkirche**, in the southwest corner of the Altstadt, sports an exquisite early Gothic stone tympanum over the north door, featuring Mary, Jesus and a fine collection of lions. Inside, particularly fine Baroque and Rococo furnishings include the richly gilded pulpit, replete with cherubim, and the organ loft, from which gold flames appear to be escaping. Retz has a schloss in two corners of its Altstadt: the picturesquely peeling ivy-covered Schloss Gatterburg, in the southeastern corner, holds a small **Fahrradmuseum** (May–Oct daily 2–5pm; ⓣ0664/6431791; €3), where cycling aficionados can enjoy old bicycles. A more famous monument, though, is Retz's eighteenth-century **Windmühle** (Sat & Sun 10.30am–4.30pm; €2.20), one of Austria's few remaining windmills. To reach it, pass under the Verderberhaus and the medieval Znaimer Tor, turn left up Windmühlgasse, and follow the signs up through the vineyards for ten minutes. There's a Buschenschank by the windmill, where you can enjoy a glass of the local wine while taking in the view and, beyond, a Baroque Calvary and a World War II cemetery.

Practicalities

Retz's tourist office (Jan–Feb Mon–Sat 9am–noon; March Mon–Sat 9am–6pm; April–Oct Mon–Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 9am–4pm; Nov–Dec Mon–Sat 9am–2pm; ⓣ02942/2700, ⓦwww.tiscover.com/retz), is on the Hauptplatz at no. 30. Here you can book **private rooms**, though none are in the Altstadt, making the modest en-suite rooms above the *Gasthof zum weissen Löwen* (ⓣ02942/2418; ❸), on the Hauptplatz preferable. But splash out a little more and you can stay in the *Althof Retz* (ⓣ02942/3711, ⓦwww.althof.at; ❹), a nicely converted castle **hotel** in the northwest corner of town. If you want to sit outside and admire the square, head for the stylish *Cyrill Blei* **café** (closed Sat afternoon & Sun), a few doors down from the tourist office. To try local wines head out to the outdoor tables of **Heuriger** in the *Althof Retz* (see above), which also has a restaurant with mains around €11. Alternatively *Gasthaus Brand*, Schlossplatz 5 (closed Mon), just southeast of the Hauptplatz, has pleasant

outdoor seating and specializes in local versions of traditional Austrian food, with mains averaging €7.

The Thayatal

Northwest of Retz, the River Thaya wiggles through a wonderful, wooded gorge studded with rocky outcrops that marks the Czech–Austrian border, and, during the Cold War, uncomfortably doubled as the Iron Curtain. But nowadays, those not needing visas can cross the reopened **border here** and explore the Czech side, which includes Podyjí National Park. **Public transport** is thin on the ground, though buses travel from Retz to **Hardegg** on weekdays, and there's an (intermittently functioning) branch line from Retz to **Drosendorf**, the most tempting local base.

Hardegg

On the Austrian side the drama of the landscape heightens around the tiny and peaceful town of **HARDEGG** thanks to the forbidding presence of the medieval Burg Hardegg. **Burg Hardegg** occupies Hardegg's highest bluff, splitting the town in two. Built in the eleventh century, the castle was partially restored in the late nineteenth century by Johann-Carl von Khevenhüller-Metsch, loyal companion to the **emperor Maximilian of Mexico** (1832–67), who's the subject of the castle museum (daily: April–June & Sept to mid-Nov 9am–5pm; July & Aug 9am–6pm; €7; combined ticket with Schloss Riegersburg €14.50; Ⓦwww.burghardegg.at). Younger brother of Franz-Josef, Maximilian foolishly accepted the throne of Mexico in 1864. Even more unwisely, he then alienated his conservative supporters by refusing to repeal liberal reforms passed by Juárez, and was eventually executed by firing squad three years later. There's a model of the *Novara*, in which he set sail for Mexico, and a copy of Max's heavy, gilded imperial crown.

▲ Burg Hardegg

Schloss Riegersburg

Just 8km west of Hardegg, close by the Czech border, there's an entirely different kind of aristocratic pile, the cream-coloured Baroque **Schloss Riegersburg** (daily: April–June & Sept to mid-Nov 9am–5pm; July & Aug 9am–6pm; €9, combined ticket with Burg Hardegg €14.50; ⓦwww.schlossriegersburg.at). A classic chateau, it makes quite an impression, with its symmetrical, south-facing facade, flanked by two domes, the apex of its pediment occupied by Atlas holding up the world. Special exhibitions are staged within the Schloss, whose best-looking room is probably the **Chinesisches Zimmer**, with its Chinoiserie wall decorations.

Geras

GERAS, 20km southwest of Hardegg, is a small town dominated by its palatial, magnolia-painted Premonstratensian abbey **Stift Geras** (May–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; ⓣ02912/345289, ⓦwww.stiftgeras.at), which was founded around 1150 but entirely rebuilt in the Baroque period by Josef Munggenast. Unfortunately, to visit the interior, the highlight of which is the showpiece **Marmorsaal**, with its ceiling fresco by Paul Troger, you need to take a tour (€7.50 – call ahead for tours in English). However, without going on a tour you can still visit the **Stiftskirche**, arguably the finest work by Munggenast in the entire complex. The interior, though by no means large, is lavishly decorated in faux pink and grey marble, and trompe l'oeil ceiling frescoes. Oval paintings, interspersed with windows crowned by open-topped pediments, line both walls of the church, but the most striking feature of all is the Rococo ornamental icing, composed mostly of gilded acanthus leaves strewn over the choir stalls, the organ and even the pews.You can **stay** cheaply, in *Meierhof* (April–Oct; ⓣ0810/081028; ❷), the monastery's converted dairy, off the road to Kottaun, or more comfortably in the *Alter Schüttkasten* (April–Oct; ⓣ02912/3320; ❺), a converted seventeenth-century monastic granary – with lots of exposed beams and a good **restaurant** – on the northern fringe of the village. The **tourist office,** Haupstr 16 (Mon–Thurs 7am–noon & 1–4pm, Fri 7am–noon; ⓣ02912/705014, ⓦwww.geras.at) can arrange **private rooms**.

Drosendorf

Without doubt the prettiest place in the Thayatal is the tiny walled town of **DROSENDORF**, perched above one of the Thaya's numerous S-bends, by the Czech border 10km to the northwest of Geras. Drosendorf Stadt, the walled town, is little more than the long, leafy **Hauptplatz**; at the eastern end stands the town's sixteenth-century **Rathaus**, with its shapely gable and richly *sgraffitoed* facade; to the south lies the pinkish Renaissance **Schloss**, now a hotel (see below). In the sixteenth-century Bürgerspital, in the backstreet east of the main square, you'll find the small **Stadtmuseum** (July & Aug daily 3–6pm; free), housing a moderately interesting collection of artefacts, including the old night watchman's horn, pike and uniform from the turn of the nineteenth century.

The **train station** is ten minutes' walk to the southeast, off the road to Geras, while **buses** arrive at Hauptplatz, close to the **tourist information**, Hauptplatz 1 (Mon–Fri 7.30am–4pm; ⓣ02915/2213, ⓦwww.drosendorf.at). As for **accommodation**, *the* place to stay is the wonderful *Schloss Drosendorf* (ⓣ02915/23210, ⓦwww.schloss-drosendorf.at; ❹), where huge bedrooms with stucco ceilings and Baroque stoves are surprisingly affordable. Failing that, you've a choice between the two excellent family-run *Gasthöfe* on the main square both of which do good inexpensive Austrian **food**. Or, if you leave the town via the

Raabser Tor, and follow the signs, you'll quickly come to the town's **HI hostel**, (reception opens 8am–1pm & 5–9pm; ⓣ02915/2257; doubles ②).

Eggenburg

Located halfway between the Danube and the Czech border, and 19km southwest of Retz, the walled town of **EGGENBURG** is primarily worth a visit for the **Österreichische Motorradmuseum** (early Jan to mid-Dec Mon–Fri 8am–4pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm; €6; ⓦwww.motorradmuseum.at), on Museumgasse one block east of the train station. The forecourt, littered with scores of old bikes and even a vintage Viennese tram, gives a fair indication of the scale of the enterprise – over three hundred pristinely restored motorbikes lie within. The museum kicks off with a parade of sleek, black interwar BMWs and ends with a posse of great British bikes, including classic 1950s café racers like the BSA Gold Star. In between, there's every conceivable type of bike, from a couple of Laurin & Klements from before World War I to the fabulous three-seater Böhmerland 600, built in 1929 and the longest motorbike ever in production. Also on Museumgasse is the **Krahuletz-Museum** (April–Dec daily 9am–5pm; €3), which houses the mineral and fossil collection of local-born geology professor, Johann Krahuletz (1848–1928) and is a well-laid-out museum that succeeds in making what could be a deathly subject as interesting as possible. You can look into a microscope and inspect fifteen different types of crystal, and there are plenty of other hands-on exhibits aimed at children in particular. The local museum, on the first floor, is less interesting, despite its fine collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century clocks and watches.

Museums aside, Eggenburg has an attractive **Altstadt**, north of the Krahuletz-Museum up Kremserstrasse and centred on the spacious **Hauptplatz**, with its dazzling plague column. The most remarkable single building on the square is the sixteenth-century **Gemaltes Haus**, smothered with *sgraffito* scenes: Old Testament scenes on the Kremserstrasse, and a moralist tale on the main facade, with some very nasty devils walking over the flames of hell towards the sinner. The town's Gothic **Pfarrkirche**, west of the main square up Kirchengasse, is also worth a look for its fine lierne vaulting, and the gilded figures that peep out from amidst the Gothic tracery of the pulpit. Outside the church, follow the signs to the **Beinhaus**, by the foundations of the old Karner, and switch the light on to see the gruesome wall of bones and skulls illuminated within. To view Eggenburg's fortifications at their most impressive, head up Judengasse from the church, where the walls stand 10m high on either side of the **Kanzlerturm** (May–Sept Sun 10am–noon & 2–6pm; €1.50), which houses a territorial army museum to the local Bürgerkorps, and gives access to the walls.

Eggenburg **train station**, ten minutes' walk south of the Altstadt, has frequent connections to Vienna. Halfway along, and housed within the Krahuletz-Museum, is the **tourist office** (Jan–March Mon–Fri 8am–noon; April–Dec daily 9am–5pm; ⓣ02984/3400, ⓦwww.eggenburg.at), which can organize **private rooms**. Otherwise, **accommodation** is limited to the large, comfortable *Stadthotel* (ⓣ02984/3531; ④) on Kremserstr 8, just up from the Gemaltes Haus. For standard Austrian **food** try *Gasthaus zum goldenen Kreuz*, on Hauptplatz (closed Wed & Thurs out of season), which serves up filling, inexpensive meals.

The Kamptal and around

The green and verdant **Kamptal** is one of the most attractive stretches of the Waldviertel and enhanced by the presence of several dignified castles and a

wonderful monastery. With all attractions within spitting distance, the transport hub **HORN**, 14km west of Eggenburg, is the obvious base, though if you have your own transport you're better off in the more attractive nearby Gars am Kamp (see p.191) or Eggenburg (see p.188). If you do end up in Horn, then the obligatory Renaissance **Sgraffitohaus** on its Hauptplatz (no. 3) is worth a look – a panel has Joseph with Potiphar's wife tugging at his monochrome dreamcoat – as is the **Höbarth- and Madermuseum** (Palm Sunday to Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 1–5pm; €3), where, among the Roman finds, Greek vases, local history and folk art, there's a cabinet of curiosities belonging to a Herr Höbarth, the local post office clerk, amateur scholar, collector and all-round eccentric, after whom the museum is named. More memorable than either of the above is Paul Troger's light and feathery fresco decorating the main dome of the powder-pink Baroque **Wallfahrtskirche** of **Maria Dreieichen**, on the road to Eggenburg 4km southeast of Horn.

Horn's **tourist office** (10am–noon & 1pm–5pm; ☎02982/2371) occupies the entrance to the museum and will arrange **private rooms**. The nicer of the town's two **Gasthöfe** is the family-run *Gasthof Weisses Rössl* (☎02982/2398; ❸) on the Hauptplatz itself and offers a reasonable menu of Austrian standards.

Stift Altenburg

One of the finest Baroque monasteries in Austria – on a par with Melk (see p.174) but with a fraction of the visitors – the Benedictine **Stift Altenburg** (April–Oct daily 10am–5pm; €9; ⓦ www.stift-altenburg.at), lies 5km southwest of Horn and is served by up to five daily buses. Founded in 1144, it was trashed by the Swedes in 1645, and then transformed in the 1730s by Josef Munggenast. The **Stiftskirche** is the monastery's decorative highlight. Its phalanx of red marble pilasters, turquoise pendentives and generous sprinkling of light-giving lunettes create a splendid overall impression, but it's Paul Troger's apocalyptic fresco, adorning the main cupola, that steals the show, with its rich colouring and pin-sharp detailing. God is depicted commandeering his archangels in the final battle against the forces of evil, represented here by a very nasty-looking bunch of devils, a huge fire-breathing dragon and the many-headed beast from Revelation.

Other highlights, described in detail in the free audio-guide, are the **Alter Kloster**, where archeologists discovered patches of frescoes and a sixteenth-century oven decorated with biblical tiles. More spectacular, though, is the combined artistry of Munggenast and Troger, as revealed in the **Kaiserstiege**, the marble-clad **Festsaal** and, above all, in the magnificent **Bibliothek**. In the latter, a trio of domes sport three superbly vibrant Troger frescoes, their subject matter ranging from Jesus arguing with the rabbis in the synagogue to Solomon receiving the Queen of Sheba. The library's most startling feature is the sea-blue Corinthian columns, topped by gilded capitals and dramatically set off against the heavy red marble plinth and cornice. Perhaps the most remarkable chamber in the whole complex, however, is the barrel-vaulted **Krypta**, where Troger's students practised the art of "grotesque" painting, decorating the walls and ceilings in fanciful arabesques and fabulous images based around the theme of death. Considering the subject matter, the murals are full of action: there's Death as Neptune, Death as Mercury, and a wonderful scene featuring skeletons picking off cherubs with their bows and arrows.

Schloss Greillenstein

Five kilometres west of Altenburg, and no easier to reach by public transport, the charmingly dilapidated **Schloss Greillenstein** (daily: April–Oct

9.30am–5pm; July & Aug until 6pm; €5, tours €7; ⓦwww.greillenstein.at) was built in the late sixteenth century by the parvenu Hans Georg III von Küfstein and still owned by his descendants, one of whom conducts guided tours if there are enough visitors; if not, you'll be free to explore portions of the palace on your own (explanatory notes available in English). The chateau was once famous for its extravagant **Wasserspielanlage**, built in 1720, in which some 1.5km of pipes pumped water down a seventy-step waterfall to a fearsome dragon fountain. The Wasserspielanlage has long since gone, but the Baroque statues that adorned it can still be seen on the ground floor of the chateau. The dragon fountain now stands in the courtyard, which has a three-tiered loggia along one side, along with two grotesque huntsmen statues who used to lurk in the woods, while a collection of nine dwarfs shelter in a nearby room. Several more exotic Baroque sculptures dot the balustrade in front of the chateau, including a series of sphinxes, tussling cherubs and shaggy lions, while a pair of African servants flank the main entrance, naked except for their crowns, fig leaves and swords. The main rooms of the chateau harbour a few fine Renaissance ceilings, some wonderful seventeenth-century portraits of Turks, and the occasional modern art exhibition. Look out for Geistertouren (ghost tours; selected summer Fri nights; €12), and costumed Kinderführung (kids' tours; selected summer Sun 2.30pm; €3.50).

Schloss Rosenburg and Gars am Kamp

Medieval **Schloss Rosenburg** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 9.30am–5pm; €10, or €13 with falconry display; ⓦwww.rosenburg.at), situated high above the River Kamp, 5km south of Horn, is a much more commercial enterprise than other castles in the region Though not a bad-looking pile it's not the architecture but the **falconry displays** (daily 11am & 3pm), performed on horseback to music, in the castle's wonderful seventeenth-century arcaded tiltyard, that pull in the crowds. There's not an awful lot to see inside the castle, except a dull exhibition on the Hoyos family who own the place – the highlight is probably the Mannerist strap-work ceiling in the library, accessible only to those on guided tours.

The modest *Landgasthof Mann* (Ⓣ02982/2915; ❸) is the better of the two *Gasthöfe* in Rosenburg. Alternatively, you could head 5km down the Kamptal

Truppenübungsplatz Allentsteig

If you're travelling from Horn to Zwettl, it's impossible to miss the vast military zone of the **Truppenübungsplatz Allentsteig**, which stretches more than 30km at its widest point. The area was handed to the military by Hitler shortly after the 1938 Anschluss, since it contained the village of Döllersheim, where Hitler's paternal grandmother, Maria Anna Schicklgruber, was buried. Hitler was very keen to eradicate all evidence of his ancestry, so Döllersheim was used for target practice, and totally destroyed.

Hitler's paranoia dated back to 1930, when the son of his half-brother, Alois Junior, attempted to blackmail him by hinting at dark secrets in the family history. The rumour was that Maria Anna had become pregnant after sleeping with a 19-year-old Jewish lad in Graz at whose house she was working as a maid. The illegitimate son of this union was Hitler's father, Alois Schicklgruber, born in the Döllersheim parish in 1837. Money was sent to Maria Anna from Graz even after she had married Georg Hitler and moved away. Even in the absence of conclusive proof, the story rattled Hitler; hence his determination to wipe Döllersheim and its parish records off the face of the earth.

to the spa-town of **GARS AM KAMP**, where you'll find good **rooms** at *Gästehaus Winglhofer* (☎02985/2294, ⓦwww.winglhofer.at; ❷), or the secluded *Waldpension* (☎02985/2365, ⓦwww.waldpension-gars.at; ❸), a grand turn-of-the-twentieth-century villa on Wozniczakgasse, off the road to Krems. For **food**, the *Café-Konditorei Ehrenberger*, on Dreifaltigkeitsplatz, offers a filling two-course Tagesmenü for around €8. If you're around for a few days, ask at the **tourist office** (May–Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 4–6pm, Sat 10am–noon & 4–6pm, Sun 10am–noon; Oct–April 9am–noon; ☎02985/2680, ⓦwww.gars.at), in the Rathaus, about the open-air **opera** performances that take place in the medieval Burgruine overlooking the town from the opposite bank.

Zwettl and around

Deep in the heart of the rolling, forested hills of the Waldviertel, 50km west of Horn, **ZWETTL** boasts the region's second finest monastery after Altenburg. The town itself is also appealing, with a well-preserved, partially walled **Altstadt**, tucked into a U-bend of the River Zwettl, and centred on a series of interconnecting squares, lined with prettily painted and gabled sixteenth- and seventeenth-century houses. The most distinguished edifice is the *sgraffitoed* **Altes Rathaus**, worth exploring more for its architecture than its Stadtmuseum (May–Oct Fri 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 2–5pm; July & Aug also Tues–Thurs 2–5pm; €2.50); the town hall's carillon belts out a ditty from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* on the hour. A more recent addition to the main square is the **Hundertwasserbrunnen**, by Friedensreich Hundertwasser (see p.112). All his trademark touches are evident – ceramic tiles, baubles and wonky paving, and even a roof garden.

Zwettl's **train station** is half a kilometre or so north of the Altstadt. Transport to and from Stift Zwettl is limited to one or two buses a day, so you might be better off hiring a bike from the station or walking. A small number of **private rooms** – none particularly central – are available through the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–5pm; ☎02822/52233, ⓦwww.zwettl.at), in the Altes Rathaus. Other **accommodation** possibilities include a parade of fairly modest *Gasthöfe* or pensions on the main street of Landstrasse: try *Schwarzer Kater* (☎02822/52410, ⓦwww.sbeisl.at; ❷) at no. 15. For **luxury hotels**, you need to head out of town to *Schloss Rosenau* (☎02822/58221, ⓦww.schlosshotel.rosenau.at; ❼), a pretty Baroque chateau 8km west of Zwettl; it's also home to museums devoted to freemasonry, dolls and fairy tales. There are also several **campsites** to the east of Zwettl, along the banks of the River Kamp, the nearest being *Camping Lichtenfels* (☎02826/7492; May–Sept), 9km east. You can **eat** heartily and quaff some of the local *Zwettler Bier* at the *Gasthof zur goldenen Rose*, a late-sixteenth-century inn overlooking the town's plague column.

Stift Zwettl

Stift Zwettl, the Cistercian monastery for which the town is famed, is actually 3km downstream (east) from Zwettl. Founded in 1159 by Hadmar I von Kuenring, the abbey retains much of its original architecture, though greatly enlarged and embellished in the Baroque period by Josef Munggenast and Paul Troger, the pair responsible for Altenburg (see p.189). Unfortunately, their splendid **Bibliothek** is closed to the public, even those taking the 45-minute **guided tour** (May–Oct Mon–Sat 10am, 11am, 2 & 3pm, Sun 10am, 2 & 3pm; July & Aug also daily at 4pm; €7; ⓦwww.stift-zwettl.co.at) who'll get to see a reconstructed innovative Cistercian latrine, a medieval dormitory, and the

Kreuzgang (cloisters), which span the stylistic shift from Romanesque to Gothic, and retain their original chapterhouse and wash house.

The abbey's real jewel, however, is the **Stiftskirche**, which you view without a guided tour. The church's landmark 93-metre-high tower, built in grey granite, cuts a striking figure amidst the uniform yellow of the surrounding complex, its undulating facade peppered with urns, obelisks and statuary in a lighter stone – particularly fine are the cherubs holding giant burning hearts, and the archangel dealing a death blow to a winged devil. Inside, the structure of the original Gothic church remains almost unchanged, though the furnishings are predominantly High Baroque; reaching their climax in the choir, whose entrance is flanked by matching pulpit and choir organ, both heavily gilded and littered with putti and angels. Beyond lie the **choir stalls**, richly inlaid with exquisite marquetry, their entablatures occupied by a parade of gilded saints. Finally, the extraordinary **high altar** is an explosion of red, brown and orange stucco marbling, white statuary and gilded sunburst and crown. The unusual central statue of Christ crucified on an oak tree in full foliage, itself carved from oak, is a reference to Hadmar's New Year's Eve dream, in which the Virgin told him to found his abbey wherever he might find an oak tree in full bloom. The church does have one piece of late-Gothic art that's worth a glance: the **winged altar of St Bernhard**, in the second chapel in the north aisle, centred on a statue of Christ standing up on the Virgin's lap, with eight scenes from the life of Bernhard, founder of the Cistercian order, by Jörg Breu of the Danube School. Also noteworthy are the ornate confessionals lining the nave, each topped by pediment statues depicting contrite sinners. The church's fine Baroque **organ**, with its orchestra of decorative angels and cherubs, is put to good use every year at the monastery's Orgelfest, from late June to late July.

If you're visiting Stift Zwettl, and haven't brought a picnic, try the perfectly decent *Stiftstaverne* outside the monastery.

Donau-Auen and Marchfeld

The Danube flows across the flat lands east from Vienna for 50km or so before going on to form the border between Slovakia and Hungary. In contrast to Vienna, where the river has been ruthlessly canalized, here in the **Donau-Auen**, the Danube is still allowed to flood the surrounding woods and meadows, thus providing an important natural habitat for beavers, and numerous other flora and fauna. To the north lies the featureless plain of the **Marchfeld**, whose name is derived from the River March (Morava), which marks the border between Austria and Slovakia. Chateaux are dotted across this prime hunting, shooting and fishing region, though as many folk come here nowadays to watch the wildlife as to kill it. In Roman times, of course, it was the **Danube** that formed the empire's natural eastern border or *Limes*, strengthened by a series of forts along its banks. The main camp along this stretch of the Danube was **Carnuntum**, 40km or so east of Vienna, which now boasts the best Roman remains in the country, and is by far the most popular sight in the district.

Nationalpark Donau-Auen

The narrow strip of flood meadows on either side of the Danube comprises the **Nationalpark Donau-Auen** (Ⓦwww.donauauen.at), which stretches from the eastern edge of Vienna to the Slovak border. The vast majority of the national park is on the north bank, where a cycle track runs along the top of

the flood barrier embankment or Marchfelddamm, which passes through the area's characteristic birch, poplar and willow trees. Several marked footpaths explore the arms of the Danube and for a time run alongside the river itself.

Orth an der Donau

The easiest point of access, east of Vienna, is via the village of **ORTH AN DER DONAU** (Ⓦwww.orth.at), 24km east of the capital. Orth is not, in fact, on the Danube, but set back 2km from it, though there is a road leading down to the river, where the popular *Uferhaus* **restaurant** (Ⓦwww.uferhaus.at; June–Sept daily; Oct–May closed Wed) serves up delicious carp, pike and other local fish dishes. From May to October, the *Uferhaus* is also one of the meeting points for **guided walks** (*Auwanderung*) and **boat excursions** (*Bootstouren*) up the quiet arms of the Danube. These are organized by the national park, and need to be booked through the information office in Schloss Orth (March–Sept 9am–8pm; Oct & Nov 9am–5pm; Dec–March Mon–Fri 8am–1pm) or Eckartsau (see below).

Back in Orth itself, **Schloss Orth** (Easter–Oct Sat & Sun noon–5pm; €5) houses a museum with displays on the flora and fauna of the region, plus models of famous Austrian bridges over the Danube, and lots of model boats. The largest model of all, though, is devoted to Prince Eugène of Savoy's siege of Belgrade against the Turks in 1717 when he blockaded the Danube with ships. Amateur apiarists will also want to have a look round the **Bienenmuseum**, housed in the northwest tower of the castle, with colourful hives in the grounds.

Orth proper has another good **fish restaurant**, the *Binder* (Ⓣ02212/2252; ❷), with a lovely shady garden by the side of the castle. The *Binder* also offers simple **rooms** for the night, or you could try the more hotel-like *Danubius* (Ⓣ02212/2400, Ⓦwww.hotel-danubius.at; ❸), on the main road.

Schloss Eckartsau

Set in a patch of mature woodland to the south of the village of Eckartsau, 5km east of Orth, **Schloss Eckartsau** (April–Oct Sat & Sun 11am–2pm; €8) was built in the 1720s as a convenient hunting lodge within easy reach of the capital by the powerful Kinsky family. The impressive Baroque west portal, with its pediment frieze of Diana and cherubs restraining hounds and stags, dates from this time. After a brief period of use by the Habsburgs, who acquired it in 1760, the chateau was mothballed for over a hundred years until the Archduke Franz Ferdinand decided to restore it (and install electricity), inviting Kaiser Wilhelm II over for a shooting party in 1908. Eckartsau is best known, however, as the final refuge of the emperor Karl I and the imperial family, who lived here for five months between the end of World War I and their journey into exile from the local train station on March 23, 1919.

Despite the restricted opening times, a visit to Eckartsau is well worth the effort. Access to the royal apartments is via the frescoed **Grosses Stiegenhaus**, designed by Fischer von Erlach, with its enormous gilded lamps and stucco hunting panoplies. The **Festsaal**, with a Daniel Gran ceiling fresco of Olympian gods lounging around in the clouds, is probably the single most impressive room. Like all the chateaux in the Marchfeld, Eckartsau suffered in the aftermath of World War II from looting by locals, and by Russian soldiers, who even stole the gold thread from the silk wall hangings. It was in the **Grandsalon** on November 13, 1918, that the emperor Karl suspended his claim to the throne of Hungary. After some wonderful bird-themed silk wall-hangings and Chinoiserie shutters, you finally enter Franz Ferdinand's living quarters, decked out in the usual heavy wood furnishings, though equipped with a tiled

The last emperor

Emperor Karl I was born in 1887 at Schloss Persenbeug in Lower Austria, and spent the carefree, privileged childhood typical of a Habsburg archduke. As the emperor Franz-Josef I's great nephew, Karl hardly expected to become emperor himself. However, Franz-Josef's only son, Rudolf, committed suicide in 1889 (see p.203), and the emperor's brother, Karl Ludwig, died unexpectedly in 1896 after drinking contaminated water whilst on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Karl Ludwig's eldest son, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, became heir to the throne, but he had to agree to cut his children out of the royal inheritance in order to marry the lowly Countess Chotek (see p.179). As a result, when Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, it was his nephew, Karl, who was unexpectedly elevated to the status of crown prince. Two years later, in the midst of World War I, Franz-Josef died at the age of 86, and Karl somewhat reluctantly took up the reins of power.

Emperor Karl's brief reign is best known for his bungled attempt at negotiating a separate peace for the Austro-Hungarian Empire (behind the Germans' backs) in March 1917, using as an intermediary Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma, brother of his wife, Zita, and a soldier in the Belgian army. When the whole affair became public knowledge in the spring of 1918, it caused a great deal of embarrassment all round, particularly in view of the fact that the young emperor had agreed that Alsace-Lorraine should be returned to the French (without asking the Germans). In the end, on Armistice Day, ensconced in Schönbrunn with the empire crumbling around him, Karl agreed to sign a document relinquishing "all participation in the affairs of state", a compromise formula which avoided an official abdication. The very same day, the family left for the imperial hunting lodge at Eckartsau, where, two days later, Karl was forced to agree to withdraw from Hungarian state affairs, though again he refused to abdicate outright.

When the Austrian republic's first parliament convened in March 1919, Karl was given an ultimatum: abdication, exile or prison. He chose exile, and he and his family

bathroom and sunken bath and shower that were clearly the height of modernity at the time.

Schloss Eckartsau is also home to a **Nationalpark information office** (April–Oct daily 8am–noon & 1–4pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 9am–1pm; ⓣ02214/2335-18, ⓦwww.donauauen.at), where you can pick up information and book yourself a place on one of the regular guided walks or boat excursions.

Marchfeld

The flatness of the **Marchfeld** is pretty relentless, but it does boast a handsome bevy of chateaux worth visiting. However, getting around with public transport can be tricky: Marchegg is on the Vienna–Bratislava train line, and Niederweiden is a short walk from Engelhartstetten train station, but buses only run a decent schedule on the weekends. As a border region, the Marchfeld has seen more than its fair share of battles over the centuries. It was at the **Battle of Marchfeld** in 1278 that Rudolf of Habsburg defeated King Otakar II of Bohemia, and thus secured the Austrian lands – roughly Upper and Lower Austria – and Styria for the dynasty. And in 1809 the Marchfeld was the scene of two of the bloodiest battles in the Napoleonic Wars. In May, at the **Battle of Aspern** (now within Vienna's city limits), Napoleon suffered his first ever defeat at the hands of the Habsburg Archduke Karl: Austrian losses amounted to an incredible 23,000, but the French lost nearly half of their entire army, with 43,000 being killed or taken prisoner. Austrian victory was short-lived, and two months later at the **Battle of Deutsch-Wagram**,

left Eckartsau for Switzerland, under British escort. Shortly afterwards, the Austrian government passed a law confiscating the family's property and banishing them from the country, unless they renounced their rights to the throne. Restoration in Austria was out of the question, but the situation in Hungary was much more hopeful. The communist regime of Béla Kun had fled, and Karl's former naval chief, Admiral Horthy, had seized power and declared himself regent. However, when Karl travelled incognito (disguised as a Portuguese gardener) on a third-class ticket across Austria to meet Horthy face to face in Budapest, in March 1921, the admiral refused to hand over power. The "Easter Bid" was a resounding failure, but in October the same year Karl made a last, desperate attempt to regain the Hungarian half of his empire, flying secretly into Sopron, in western Hungary, accompanied by his pregnant wife. After a brief skirmish with Horthy's forces in the suburbs of Budapest, Karl was forced to admit defeat for a second time, and sailed, once more under British escort, into permanent exile on the island of Madeira, where he died of pneumonia less than six months later at the age of 35. The irrepressible Zita outlived her husband by 67 years, dying in her late nineties in 1989.

Of course, monarchists are eager to point out that Karl was, in fact, by no means the last Habsburg. In the 1930s, Karl's eldest son, Otto, kept the dynastic cause going from the family's refuge outside Brussels. An apocryphal story has it that when asked if he would be watching the Austria-Hungary football match, Otto replied, "Who are we playing?" Eventually, in the 1960s, he renounced his claim to the throne (though his brothers still refused), handing it on to his son, Karl, and was therefore able to pay a few brief visits to his homeland. In the 1980s, Otto became a Euro MP for Bavaria, where he continues to live in exile. Austria has since rescinded the law banning the Habsburgs from the country unless they abdicate their claims to the throne, but a return of the monarchy looks as unlikely as ever.

despite losing another 34,000 soldiers, Napoleon reversed the result and defeated the Austrians, whose casualties exceeded 50,000.

Schloss Niederweiden and Schlosshof

Some 10km northeast of Eckartsau, and visible for miles around across the flat Marchfeld, is the French chateau-style hunting lodge of **Schloss Niederweiden** (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm; €9.50), designed in 1693 by Fischer von Erlach for Count Starhemberg. Once surrounded by ornate formal gardens, this ochre chateau, with its natty black shutters, now looks slightly forlorn amidst the intensive agriculture of the Marchfeld, with a busy main road passing right past its front gates. The chateau's bare interior is now hired out for parties and events, though there are a few permanent displays telling a little of the history of the place as well as special art exhibitions. In addition, the central, oval **Kuppelsaal** – added by Nicolo Pacassi – retains its original floor-to-ceiling trompe l'oeil frescoes featuring foliage, swallows and Chinese figures.

Just 3km northeast of Niederweiden is Prince Eugène of Savoy's much more palatial country seat of **Schlosshof** (mid-March to Oct daily 10am–6pm; €9.50; Ⓦ www.schlosshof.at), a severe, three-winged, imperial yellow colossus designed by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt in the late 1720s. Once again, the chateau's interior is given over to temporary exhibitions. However, a couple of rooms from Eugène's day survive, and are worth the entry fee alone: the original Baroque chapel, with its red and grey marbling and frescoed cupola, and the **Grosse Saal**, whose magnolia and white stucco-work includes a cast ceiling

relief of a mythological hunt. The formal **gardens**, which stretch down in terraces to the east of the chateau, are definitely worth a closer look, too, as is Prince Eugène's immense Orangerie. However, the views east – over to the factories and high-rise housing of Devínská Nová Ves, on the Slovak side of the River March – are not what they once were.

Marchegg

The small, walled town of **MARCHEGG**, 8km north of Schlosshof, sits right on the banks of the River March and Slovak border, and boasts a modest little ochre-coloured schloss of its own, to the north of the main square. The chateau contains an unusual **Afrikamuseum** (mid-March to Nov Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 1–5pm; €3), in the outbuildings, which displays the booty of various imperial African explorers – masks, Ashanti statues and stuffed birds and animals – mostly from West Africa. Behind the chateau, you can gain access to a network of paths and viewing platforms in the neighbouring Marchauen **WWF nature reserve**, which is home to, among other creatures, Europe's largest colony of white storks, who nest here from March to August, with a small, more elusive colony of black storks elsewhere in the reserve. The family-run *Gasthof Marcheck*, on the town's Hauptplatz, serves a decent range of traditional **food** for weary travellers. It's also worth noting that Marchegg's **train station** is a good 2km south of the town itself.

Archäologischer Park Carnuntum

Carnuntum was founded as a permanent military camp for the XV Legion around 40 AD, and in the course of the next century became the military and civil capital of the Roman province of Upper Pannonia, with a population of over 50,000. The philosopher emperor Marcus Aurelius used it as his chief military base during his campaign against the Marcomanni and Quadi tribes (171–173 AD), and wrote his second book of Meditations here. In 198 AD the local commander Septimius Severus was declared emperor by the Pannonian legions. Carnuntum's other moment of glory was in 307 AD when Emperor Diocletian came out of retirement and staged a conference in order to try and reconcile the emperors of the East and West Roman Empires. Around 400 AD the town was abandoned by the Romans and soon afterwards sacked by the Goths.

Today, the Roman remains are spread across 5km between the villages of **Petronell** and **Bad Deutsch Altenburg**. The whole area has been dubbed the **Archäologischer Park Carnuntum** (Ⓦ www.carnuntum.co.at), and is divided into two main areas: the **Zivilstadt** (Civilian City), centred on Petronell-Carnuntum (as the village is now known), and the **Militärstadt** (Military City) centred on Bad Deutsch Altenburg, where the most important finds are now displayed in the Archäologisches Museum Carnuntinum. If you don't have your own car, the best way to visit the sights is on foot, or by bike, which you can hire from Petronell or Bad Deutsch Altenburg train stations.

Petronell-Carnuntum

To get your bearings in **PETRONELL-CARNUNTUM**, it's best to head straight for the main **information centre** (mid-March to mid-Nov daily 9am–5pm), at the west of Hauptstrasse, opposite the rather attractive Romanesque Rundkapelle; here, you can pick up a map of the sites and buy a **Carnuntum Ticket** (€8), which allows you entry to all the sights within the Archäologischer Park. Adjacent to the info centre is the excavation site of the **Freilichtmuseum Petronell** where the Zivilstadt of Carnuntum once stood. Buy the guidebook or rent an audioguide (in English), or you won't get much

out of the ruins, which rarely rise above foundation level. At the far end of the site's sloping field, a substantial slice of the *Limes* road and accompanying drainage system have been preserved, not to mention full-scale reconstructions of the town's Temple of Diana and a Roman villa.

A five-minute walk down the road that runs along the western perimeter of the excavations beings you to the more intriguing foundations of the **Grosse Therme** (public baths), a vast complex thought to have been significantly embellished in preparation for the 307 AD conference. If you're pushed for time, though, you're probably best off skipping the excavation site altogether and heading off to the more substantial ruins. The most impressive of these is the **Heidentor**, a gargantuan gateway that stands in the fields a kilometre or so to the southwest of the village, beyond the railway tracks and route 9. Signs from the Heidentor will lead you to the nearby **Amphitheater Petronell**, an out-of-town theatre even in Roman times, which was capable of seating 13,000 on its grassy banks. A lot more impressive, however, is the smaller **Amphitheater Bad Deutsch-Altenburg**, situated off the road to Bad Deutsch Altenburg, to the east of Petronell, where much more of the Roman stonework has been preserved, including the governor's seat, the entrance tunnels and the cages for the circus animals.

Bad Deutsch Altenburg

The chief sight in the spa-town of **BAD DEUTSCH ALTENBURG** (Ⓦwww.baddeutsch-altenburg.at) is the **Archäologisches Museum Carnuntinum** (mid-March to mid-Nov Mon noon–5pm, Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; covered by the Carnuntum Ticket), overlooking the Kurpark at the far eastern end of the main street, Badgasse. The museum is a pleasure to visit, thanks in part to the lovely building in which it's housed, purpose-built by Friedrich Ohmann in 1904 to look something like a giant Roman villa. All the museum's labelling is in German, but luckily, if your German isn't up to it, some of the finds are impressive enough without any additional information. The museum's finest individual piece is the marble *Dancing Maenad* ("*Tanzende Mänade*"), whose finely carved drapery reveals her beautifully formed (and much-photographed) buttocks. In the foyer, there's also an interesting (mostly reconstructed) Mithraic relief, from the male-only cult popular among Roman legions before the advent of Christianity. The relief depicts the Persian deity Mithras slaying a cosmic bull, while a scorpion grasps its genitals and a dog licks its wounds (the bull's blood was seen as life-giving, and initiates to the cult had to bathe in the stuff in subterranean tombs).

While you're in Bad Deutsch Altenburg, it's worth strolling up the nearby hill, known as the Kirchenberg, to take a closer look at the town's landmark **Marienkirche** (aka Stephanskirche), a bizarre Gothic edifice made up of three elements that look like they belong to separate churches. The octagonal west tower is remarkably small and features a series of grimacing gargoyles, while at the opposite end of the church is a fanciful presbytery, prickling with delicately carved finials, which looks like it should form part of a much larger church. Between the two is the older Romanesque nave, which is much plainer and sits much lower than either the tower or the chancel.

Practicalities

The **train station** in Petronell is a short walk south of the village centre, while the one in Bad Deutsch Altenburg is a similar distance southwest of the spa. It takes about an hour to reach either station on S-Bahn line 7 from Wien-Mitte or Wien-Nord, making the whole area an easy day-trip from Vienna. There's a **tourist office** (April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; Ⓣ02163/3555-10, Ⓦwww.niederoesterreich.at/carnuntum) in Petronell, opposite the main excavation

site, and another (Mon–Thurs 8am–noon & 12.30–4pm, Fri 8am–1pm; ☎02165/62900-11) in the *Kurhotel* on Badgasse in Bad Deutsch Altenburg.

As for **accommodation**, the *Gasthof zum Heidentor* (☎02163/2201; ❷), in Petronell, has pristine en-suite rooms. A better bet, however, is Bad Deutsch Altenburg, with a nice leafy Kurpark and, being a spa town, a much wider choice of places. A good bet is the family-run *Pension Madle* (☎02165/62763, ✉pension.madle@inode.at; ❷), which has a nice outside terrace, and en-suite facilities in all sixteen rooms. All the above places have **restaurants** attached, where you can get decent, reasonably priced Austrian food.

Hainburg an der Donau

Squeezed between two hills that signal the end of Austrian territory, the little walled town of **HAINBURG AN DER DONAU**, 3km east of Bad Deutsch Altenburg, is another good base for exploring the area. As befits a border town that is still every bit the gateway into Austria from Slovakia and northern Hungary, Hainburg boasts extensive fortifications, including three substantial gateways, the largest of which is the colossal thirteenth-century **Wiener Tor**.

If you need to stay the night head for the homely *Gasthof zu drei Raben* (☎02165/62407; ❸), on Ungarstrasse. The best place to eat out is *Zur alten Bampress*, an excellent *Stadtheuriger* on Ungarstrasse (closed Tues), with a lovely courtyard. Hainburg has two **train stations**: Hainburg-Donau Frachtenbahnhof, to the west of town, and Hainburg Ungartor, closer to the centre, east of the Altstadt.

Rohrau

The composer Josef Haydn was born in **ROHRAU**, a one-street village 4km south of Petronell, on the banks of the River Leitha. The **Haydn-Geburtshaus** (Tues–Sun 10am–4pm; €2) is a lovely thatched cottage, with a delightful arcaded courtyard covered with vines and a cosy, folksy feel to it. This creates something of a false impression, as it was clearly a hovel when Haydn was born here in 1732 (the original building, built by Haydn's father in 1728, burnt down in 1899). By all accounts, Haydn had a pretty miserable childhood – with "more floggings than food", according to one of his letters – and was no doubt relieved when he was sent off to nearby Hainburg at the tender age of 5, eventually becoming a choirboy at the Stephansdom in Vienna (for more on Haydn's life, see p.250). Few of his personal belongings have made their way here, apart from a baptismal bowl and a rather attractive tortoiseshell snuff box.

In order to make ends meet, Haydn's mother was for a while employed as a cook at the nearby **Schloss Rohrau** (Easter–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €8). The present, rather plain, late-Baroque moated chateau is still occupied, in part, by the Harrachs, though the public are allowed in to admire their extensive private art collection displayed on the first floor, along with the family's Meissen porcelain and Chinese vases. The bulk of the art collection came into the family thanks to a couple of illustrious ancestors: Ferdinand Bonaventura (1636–1706), who served as imperial ambassador in Madrid, and Aloys Thomas (1669–1742), who served as Viceroy of Naples. However, despite the smattering of big-name painters – there are some minor works and sketches by the likes of van Dyck, Rubens, Teniers and Jan Breughel the Elder – there are few masterpieces here.

Bruck an der Leitha

When the River Leitha formed the historical border between Austria and Hungary under the Habsburgs, the walled town of **BRUCK AN DER**

LEITHA (Ⓦwww.bruckleitha.at), 9km southwest of Rohrau, served as the main border post. Now most folk simply pass through the town en route to Neusiedler See, but it's a more promising place to stay than Rohrau if you're in the area. The town walls are particularly impressive as you approach from Vienna, and the spacious central **Hauptplatz** boasts a parade of monuments – a Marian column, a Trinity column, punctuated by two fountains – overlooked by a handsome silver-white Pfarrkirche. The Pompeiian-red **Schloss Harrach**, east of the main square at the end of Stefaniegasse, though closed to the public, has a nice park for a picnic.

The town's **train station** is half a kilometre south of the Hauptplatz, where you'll find the town's **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–noon; Ⓣ02162/62221) by the church on Hauptplatz. **Accommodation** options include the *Ungarische Krone* (Ⓣ02162/62777, Ⓦwww.ungarischekrone.com; ④), a three-star hotel with clean modern rooms, on the other side of Leitha off Parndorferstrasse, or the excellent *Pension Eitler* (Ⓣ&Ⓕ02162/63206; ②), further down at no. 173. *Café Haas*, on the east side of Hauptplatz, is a really nice, classy **café-restaurant** and pizzeria with tables outside overlooking the square. The best place to sample the local **wine** is in the lovely ivy-strewn *Schanigarten* of the secluded *Harrachkeller*, on Schlossgasse.

The Wienerwald area

The gentle wooded hills of the **Wienerwald** (Vienna Woods) stretch from the suburbs of Vienna itself southwest to the alpine foothills that form the border between Lower Austria and Styria. As such, they have been a favourite weekend destination for the Viennese, who can simply hop on a tram to get there (see p.207 for details). In many ways, this accessibility is the woods' chief virtue. Compared to the country's sublime alpine peaks, the Wienerwald's scenery is pretty low-key. The main resorts, such as **Mödling** and the spa-town of **Baden**, cling to the eastern edge of the Wienerwald, where the hills dip down into the vineyards of the plain, and make for easy day-trips from the capital; if you want to spend a day or two walking in the woods themselves, you're best off overnighting at either of the above places.

Mödling bei Wien

Like Baden (see p.202), **MÖDLING BEI WIEN** (Ⓦwww.moedling.at), 15km south of Vienna, makes great play of its associations with Beethoven, who stayed here in the summer of 1819. Even if you've no interest in the composer, Mödling is a very pretty little town that has preserved a remarkable number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century houses in its minuscule Altstadt.

From the **train station**, to the east of town, it's a ten-minute walk along **Hauptstrasse** to Freiheitsplatz on the northeastern edge of the old town. In 1818 Beethoven rented three rooms nearby at the Hafnerhaus, Hauptstr 79, now the **Beethoven-Haus** (enquire at the tourist office; €2), whilst he worked on, among other things, the *Diabelli Variations* and the *Missa Solemnis*. "From behind the closed door of one of the parlours we could hear the master working on the fugue of the Credo, singing, yelling, stamping his feet", some friends, who dropped in on him, recalled; "when we had heard enough of this almost frightening performance and were about to depart, the door opened and Beethoven stood before us, his features distorted to the point of inspiring terror. He looked as though he had just engaged in a life and death struggle with the

whole army of contrapuntists, his everlasting enemies." The following year Beethoven intended to stay in Mödling again, but was refused lodgings "on account of his strange behaviour".

From Freiheitsplatz, head up Herzoggasse, which is flanked by attractive houses bearing frescoes and *sgraffiti*, into the pedestrianized main square, **Schrannenplatz**, with its distinctive fountain decorated with ornamental pineapples, and, beyond, the town's dinky little sixteenth-century **Rathaus**, sporting a tiny loggia at one corner. A short hike up Pfarrgasse will bring you to the town's huge **Pfarrkirche St Othmar**, built in the fifteenth century to double as a defensive stronghold. Close by stands a distinctive circular tower-like charnel house, featuring a superb knotted Romanesque portal, and sporting a Baroque onion dome.

A network of paths crisscrosses the adjacent Wienerwald: from the other side of the town's river, to the south, you can explore the woods of the **Naturpark Föhrenberge**, which is punctuated with numerous monuments, the most famous of which is the Neoclassical Husarentempel. An easy two-kilometre walk west along the river from Mödling is the popular tourist attraction of the **Seegrotte Hinterbrühl** (April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–3pm, Sat & Sun 9am–3.30pm; €9; Ⓦwww.seegrotte.at), a former gypsum mine, which fell into disuse when it was flooded in 1912. Later, the caves were used by the Nazis as a work camp for building fuselages for jet fighters. Guided tours (in a variety of languages including English) are quite fun – but cold, so wrap up before you enter – and finish with an atmospheric boat ride through the flooded mineshafts.

You can pick up **tourist information** from Kaiserin Elisabeth-Str 2 (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; Ⓣ02236/26727, Ⓦwww.tiscover.at/moedling), just off the main square. There's a wide range of **accommodation**, from intimate pensions such as *Pension Monika* (Ⓣ02236/257359, Ⓔpensionmonika@hotmail.com; 3), Badstr 53, in the villa quarter to the south of the Altstadt, to the plush *Babenbergerhof* (Ⓣ02236/22246, Ⓦwww.babenbergerhof.com; 6), in the heart of the Altstadt at Babenbergergasse 6, which is also a decent place to eat. If you're staying the night in Mödling, be sure to check out what's on at the town's stylish **theatre**, Stadttheater Mödling, on Babenbergerstrasse.

Laxenburg

Though not strictly speaking in the Wienerwald, the former imperial residence of **LAXENBURG** (Ⓦwww.laxenburg.at) is within striking distance of the woods, 5km or so east of Mödling. The town's links with the Habsburgs go back to the fourteenth century, when Duke Albrecht III built the **Altes Schloss**, but the place really came into its own four hundred years later under the reign of Maria Theresia, who built the **Neues Schloss** (also known as the Blauer Hof and now headquarters of the suspicious-sounding International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis, a research NGO), overlooking the town's Schlossplatz. Laxenburg quickly became the family's favourite country retreat, a place in which the stifling court formalities of Vienna could be abandoned. According to one of Josef II's numerous decrees, each guest was "free to do as he will, to ride, to drive, to join in the hunt or to stay at home". Not surprisingly, it was also much frequented by the reclusive Empress Elisabeth, who gave birth to her only son, Rudolf, in the Blauer Hof in 1858 (for more on Rudolf, see p.203).

The chief attraction nowadays is the beautifully landscaped and extensive grounds of the **Schlosspark** (dawn–dusk; €1.50), whose woods are dotted with various follies: a Neoclassical temple, a grotto, a jousting arena and, at the centre

of a wooded *étoile*, the Grünes Lusthaus, a summer pavilion decorated with frescoes, where Maria Theresia's husband, Franz Stephan, used to play cards. The largest folly of the lot is the **Franzensburg**, a mock Gothic castle, described in 1814 by an English visitor as "an imperial toy . . . a little building provided with numerous turrets and watch-towers, loop-holes, irongates, and portcullises". Built in the park's artificial lake, on one of the islands linked by bridges and a little raft on a chain, the castle was conceived by the emperor Franz I as a sort of romantic retreat, based loosely on the dynasty's original seat in Switzerland. There's a café in the castle courtyard, and regular open-air theatre performances on summer weekends. Alternatively, you can go on a **guided tour** (Easter–Oct 11am, 2 & 3pm; €6) of the interior, which features lots of arms and armour, portraits and busts of the Habsburgs, quasi-medieval furnishings and even a faux dungeon, complete with fake prisoner.

If you're not picnicking in the park, the *Laxenburgerhof* does bargain three-course **lunches** for around €6 (Ⓦwww.laxenburgerhof.at; closed Mon), as does the Italian restaurant, *Gallo Rosso* (Ⓦwww.gallo-rosso.net), housed in the former Kaiserbahnhof, built in Biedermeier style in 1845 for the imperial family. There are hourly **buses** to Wien-Mitte, and regular trains to the Südbahnhof, though the Laxenburg-Biedermannsdorf **train station** is a good two-kilometre walk from Schlosspark.

Heiligenkreuz

The majority of monasteries in Austria enjoy spectacular, cliff-top locations, but the Cistercians always preferred well-watered, wooded spots for their abbeys, and **HEILIGENKREUZ**, which nestles unassumingly in the undulating landscape of the Wienerwald, 14km west of Mödling, is no exception. Don't let that put you off, however, for Heiligenkreuz is easily one of the finest examples of Romanesque-Gothic architecture in the country, and boasts, in addition, some very fine Baroque furnishings, courtesy of Italian sculptor Giovanni Giuliani.

Though the monastery was founded in the twelfth century by Duke Leopold III, who planned to establish a burial place for the Babenberg dynasty, the whole complex looks thoroughly Baroque from the outside, having been extensively rebuilt after being looted by the Turks in 1683. The main courtyard features a bevy of fantastically bushy beech trees and a splendidly animated Baroque Trinity column and fountain sculpted by Giuliani. Only on the eastern side of the courtyard do you get the first hint of the monastery's medieval origins, in the plain Romanesque facade of the **Stiftskirche**. To gain full access to the church, you must join one of the guided tours, which set off hourly (in German only; Mon–Sat 10am, 11am & 2–4pm, Sun 11am & 2–4pm; €6.60; Ⓦwww.stift-heiligenkreuz.at). Inside, the church is the product of two distinct building periods: the plain round arches of the nave are Romanesque, while the lofty, vaulted presbytery is Gothic. The Baroque choir stalls, by Giuliani again, are outstanding, each one decorated with a lime-wood relief from the Life of Christ, and crowned by cherubs and busts of eminent aristocrats, priests and bishops. They're put to good use by the brothers, who come here to sing five times a day.

The guided tours begin with the monastery's beautifully preserved thirteenth-century **cloisters**, lined with more than three hundred slender pink marble columns, which, like the church itself, perfectly illustrate the transition from the rounded arches of the Romanesque style to the pointed arches of the Gothic. Several chapels are connected to the cloisters, among them the **Kapitalkapelle**, where many of the Babenberg dynasty are buried, and the polygonal Brunnenkapelle, which echoes noisily to the sound of its fountain. Best of the

lot is the ghoulish **Totenkapelle**, decked out with black and gold furnishings by Giuliani, including a macabre set of four candelabra, supported by skeletons in shrouds. The guided tours end with a visit to the **sacristy**, an extraordinarily rich Baroque concoction, furnished with stunning inlaid wooden cabinets and decorated with frescoes framed by pink and white stucco-work, followed by a stroll round the Stfiskirche.

The *Klostergasthof* **restaurant** in the monastery serves decent home cooking, but for something from another league, you'll find the Michelin-starred *Hanner* (Ⓣ02258/2378, Ⓦwww.hanner.cc; 9), an exceedingly smart, modern gourmet restaurant and hotel, with a lovely garden terrace, off the road to Mayerling.

Mayerling

Mystery still surrounds the motives behind the suspected double suicide of **Crown Prince Rudolf** (1858–89), eldest son of the emperor Franz-Josef I and heir to the throne, and his half-Greek, 17-year-old mistress, Baroness Maria Vetsera, which took place in the early hours of the morning on January 29, 1889, at Rudolf's hunting lodge at **MAYERLING**, 2.5km southwest of Heiligenkreuz. Subject of a ballet, several films and countless books, the event has captured the popular imagination for over a hundred years – as recently as 1991, an Austrian businessman stole Maria's coffin after becoming obsessed with Mayerling.

The site of the lodge is a pleasant half an hour's walk from Heiligenkreuz. Franz-Josef had the original building demolished shortly after the incident, and a neo-Gothic **chapel** (April–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–6pm; Oct–March closes 5pm), run by Carmelite nuns, erected in its place. Folk still flock to the chapel, where there's a small exhibition featuring furniture and a bit of carpet from the old hunting lodge, plus photos and portraits of the tragedy's protagonists, and, the original coffin in which Maria Vetsera was buried in Heiligenkreuz.

Baden bei Wien

Just 25km south of Vienna, the spa-town of **BADEN BEI WIEN** (Ⓦwww.baden.at) is an easy day-trip from the capital, accessible either by train or via its very own tram link. This compact little town, peppered with attractive Neoclassical buildings in varying shades of magnolia and ochre, comes across as deeply provincial, a haven of peace for its elderly spa patients. But back in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Baden was *the* most fashionable spa-town in the Habsburg Empire, the favourite summer holiday retreat of none other than the emperor Franz II (1792–1835). Baden's distinctive uniform Biedermeier appearance is largely the result of a building frenzy – much of it under the direction of the architect Josef Kornhäusel – prompted by a devastating fire in 1812. A swim in Baden's hot thermal baths is highly recommended and, as the town lies on the very edge of the Wienerwald, the walking and picnicking possibilities are a further enticement.

The Town

The small, triangular **Hauptplatz**, at the centre of Baden's pedestrian zone, gives you an idea of the modest scale of things in Baden. Almost dwarfing the surrounding buildings, including Kornhäusel's Neoclassical **Rathaus** from 1815, is the central plague column, erected a hundred years earlier, and crowned with a gilded sunburst. Even the last of the Holy Roman emperors, Franz II, chose an unassuming three-storey building – now the **Kaiserhaus**, on the east side of the square – as his summer residence. The last of the Habsburgs, Emperor Karl I, also

The Mayerling tragedy

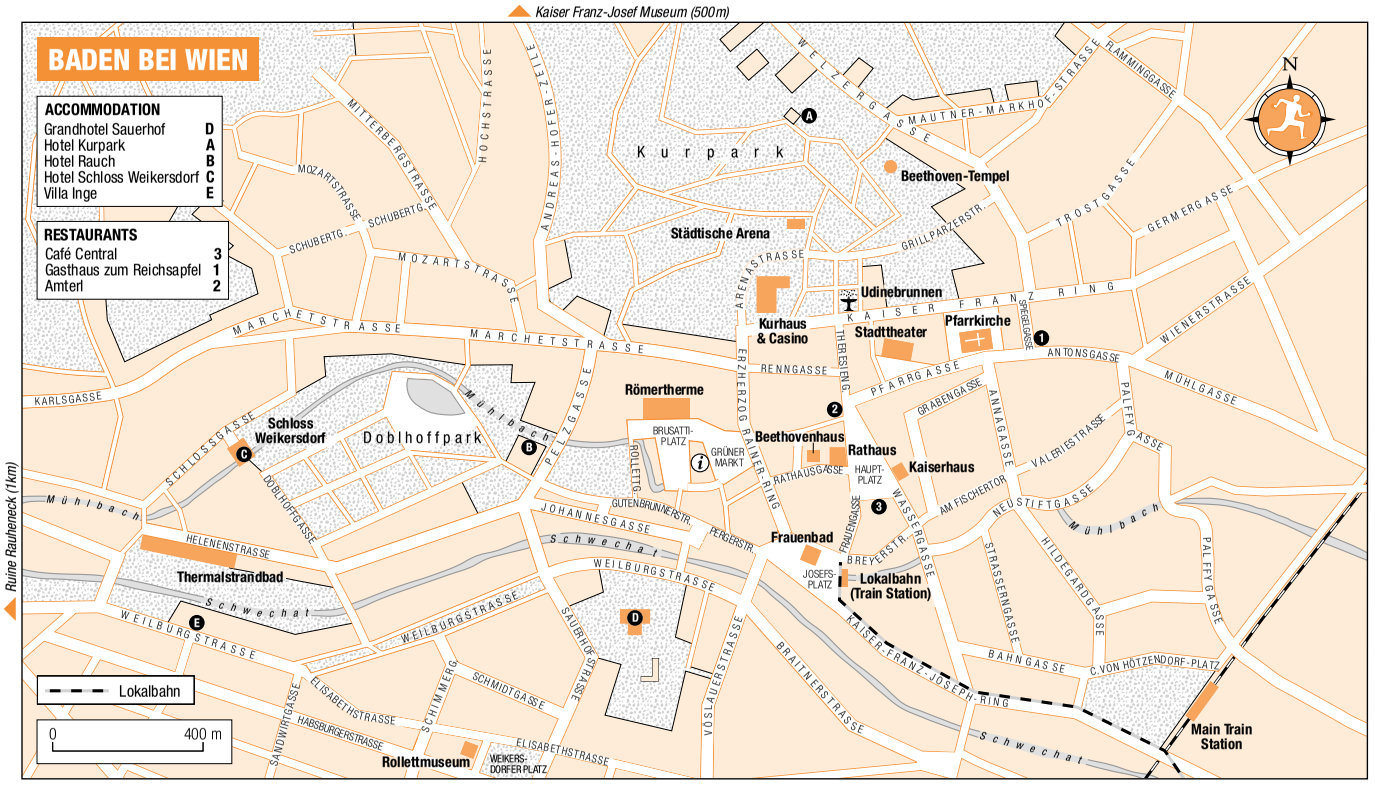
Numerous theories continue to be put forward as to why the **Crown Prince Rudolf**, only son of Franz-Josef I and heir to the throne, chose to take his own life. The Viennese, who love to sentimentalize the tragedy, tend to claim it was all for love, yet Rudolf was a notoriously fickle womanizer, and **Maria Vetsera** just one in a long line of pretty mistresses. The plot thickens when you consider that the previous summer Rudolf had proposed a suicide pact to his long-term mistress **Mizzi Caspar**, but was turned down. On the very night before his suicide, Rudolf spent the evening with Mizzi Caspar, before leaving to meet Maria at Mayerling. It's true that his marriage to **Princess Stephanie** of Belgium – arranged by his father for political reasons – was a dismal failure, but it wasn't enough to drive him to suicide, and certainly didn't prevent him from keeping bachelor digs at the Hofburg where he could receive his numerous mistresses. One plausible theory is that, in 1887, he contracted a venereal disease, which he believed to be incurable. Worse still, it's thought that he had infected Stephanie, causing her to become infertile (having failed to produce a male heir to the throne).

Others contend that it was a political act, born of frustration with his lack of any part in the decision-making process of government. Franz-Josef allowed his son little real power and, in any case, disagreed with him on most issues. Rudolf, who was never close to his father, tended to mix with liberals opposed to his father's ministers' policies, and even wrote anonymous, critical articles to the liberal *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*. There were rumours at the time that Rudolf had been assassinated by his political opponents or French secret agents, a version of events upheld by the late Empress Zita as recently as 1982. Another possible explanation is that Rudolf, having written to the pope to seek an annulment of his marriage, had been snubbed by the pontiff, who had returned the petition directly to Franz-Josef. Finally, on January 26, 1889, Rudolf and his father are known to have had a fierce argument – what it was about we shall never know.

Four days later, Rudolf and Maria's bodies were discovered by Rudolf's hunting partner, Count Hoyos, who had got no answer when he called in at **Mayerling**. The first official version of events was that Rudolf had died of apoplexy, but after the post-mortem it was admitted that he had shot himself. As suicides were denied a Christian burial, the pathologists in charge were wise enough to suggest that "the act was committed in a moment of psychological unbalance", thus allowing the Catholic authorities an escape clause. Rudolf's request to be buried in the nearby village of Alland alongside his mistress was denied, and he was buried in the Kaisergruft amid much pomp and circumstance. Maria Vetsera's presence at Mayerling was never acknowledged by the Habsburgs, though rumours abounded. Some 36 hours after the incident, her fully clothed corpse, in the first stages of rigor mortis, was wedged upright between her two uncles in a carriage, transported to Heiligenkreuz and secretly buried in the cemetery there. In May of the same year, her mother paid for a grave, which stands there to this day with the epitaph: "like a flower, a person sprouts and is snapped off".

stayed here, during World War I, when Baden became the Austrian army headquarters. (Baden later reached its nadir in the decade after World War II, when it was used as the Soviet army headquarters.)

From 1804 onwards, Baden became a favourite retreat of Beethoven, too; he made a total of fifteen visits, staying at various addresses, one of which, at nearby Rathausgasse 10, has been turned into the **Beethovenhaus** (Tues–Fri 4–6pm, Sat & Sun 10–noon & 4–6pm). In the 1820s, Beethoven was well known around the spa as the local eccentric; as one friend recalls, "his hair was coarse and bristly . . . and when he put his hand through it, it remained standing in all directions which often looked comical". On one occasion he


Kaiser Franz-Josef Museum (500m)
BADEN BEI WIEN
ACCOMMODATION
Grandhotel Sauerhof D
Hotel Kurpark A
Hotel Rauch B
Hotel Schloss Weikersdorf C
Villa Inge E
RESTAURANTS
Café Central 3
Gasthaus zum Reichsapfel 1
Amterl 2
Ruine Rauheneck (1km)
Lokalbahn
0
400 m
N
Kurpark
Beethoven-Tempel
Städtische Arena
Udinebrunnen
Kurhaus & Casino
Stadttheater
Pfarrkirche
Römertherme
Beethovenhaus
Rathaus
Kaiserhaus
Frauenbad
Lokalbahn (Train Station)
Main Train Station
Schloss Weikersdorf
Doblhoffpark
Thermalstrandbad
Rollettmuseum
Mühlbach
Schwechat
Mautner-Markhof-Strasse
Flammingasse
Trostgasse
Germergasse
Grillparzerstr.
Wienerstrasse
Mühlgasse
Antonsgasse
Pfarrgasse
Renngasse
Grabengasse
Annagasse
Palffygasse
Valeriestrasse
Neustiftgasse
Am Fischertor
Hildegardgasse
Strassergasse
Bahngasse
C.von Hötzendorf-Platz
Kaiser-Franz-Joseph-Ring
Braitnerstrasse
Wassergasse
Breyerstr.
Frauengasse
Josefs-Platz
Haupt-Platz
Grüner Markt
Brusatti-Platz
Rollettg.
Gutenbrunnerstr.
Fergerstr.
Johannesgasse
Weilburgstrasse
Helenenstrasse
Doblhoffgasse
Schlossgasse
Karlsgasse
Pelzgasse
Säubohrgasse
Vöslauerstrasse
Elisabethstrasse
Habsburgerstrasse
Schimmerg.
Schmidtgasse
Sandwirtgasse
Weikersdorfer Platz
Marchetstrasse
Schubertg.
Mozartstrasse
Mitterbergstrasse
Hochstrasse
Andreas-Hofer-Zeile
Arenastrasse
Theresieng.
Herzog Rainer-Ring
Rathausgasse
Spiegelgasse
Kaiser Franz Ring
Welzerg.

even got himself arrested, in the nearby town of Wiener Neustadt, after a local resident had been so frightened by his dishevelled appearance that she had called the police. On being arrested, the composer said "I am Beethoven", to which the constable replied, "You are a tramp, Beethoven doesn't look like that." It wasn't until later that night that the town's musical director was finally called out to identify him, and the mayor sent him back to Baden in the state coach.

Woefully, the three small rooms Beethoven rented out contain no mementoes of the composer's three sojourns here (there's a section on later, lesser-known Badenites to pad things out). It was in these rooms that Beethoven wrote parts of his *Missa Solemnis* in 1821, and, two years later, finished his *Ninth Symphony*, though he had to get a friend to persuade the landlord to take him back on the promise of good conduct. The landlord agreed on condition that Beethoven pay for a set of new shutters (the previous set, on which Beethoven had scrawled financial and musical calculations, had been sold by the landlord for a piece of gold).

The Kurpark and longer walks

The focus of Baden the spa, as opposed to Baden the town, is the ochre-coloured *Kurhaus* (now a casino) and the *Sommerarena* (summer theatre), north of Hauptplatz by the **Kurpark**, which is laid out on the steep slopes of the Wienerwald. This is by far the nicest bit of Baden, and the place to head for if you're intent on a spot of walking or picnicking, as the park's web of paths can quickly transport you high above the town. In its lowest reaches, closest to the town, the park is formally arranged around a bandstand and the **Undinebrunnen**, an eye-catching fountain featuring a gilded water sprite emerging from a vast rockery replete with oversized frogs, serpents, fish and the sprite's giant stepfather. Higher up the park, various monuments emerge from the foliage: statues of Johann Strauss and his chief rival Josef Lanner, a temple to Mozart, and, biggest of the bunch, the vine-garlanded **Beethoven-Tempel**, a Neoclassical rotunda sporting some dubious underlit 1920s frescoes, but the best of all views across the spa.

For a more taxing walk, follow the signs to the offbeat **Kaiser Franz-Josef Museum** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 2–6pm; €2), roughly half an hour's walk through the woods from the bandstand, in a northwesterly direction. Although it advertises itself as a museum of folk art and craftwork, the collection is a lot more eclectic than you might imagine. The reconstructed smithy is par for the course, but the mousetrap from the room in which the commander in chief of the imperial forces during the Thirty Years' War, Albrecht von Waldstein, was murdered in 1634 is rather more unusual. In addition, there's a whole collection of arms and uniforms from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, banknotes, Habsburg memorabilia, a paper theatre, cake moulds, two penny farthings, and more.

Baden is also a perfect starting point for a full day's **hiking** in the Wienerwald. From the western end of Weilburgstrasse, a path leads up to the twelfth-century rubble of the Ruine Rauheneck. Beyond here lies the Kalternberger Forst, whose main peak is the Hoher Lindkogel (834m), 6km across the forested hills to the west; the hike there and back is relatively easy and takes about six hours nonstop.

The Rollettmuseum and Doblhoffpark

A bizarre collection of exhibits fills the **Rollettmuseum** (daily except Tues 3–6pm; €2), ten minutes' walk southwest of Hauptplatz on Weikersdorfer Platz.

S&M in Baden

The staid spa-town of Baden is the unlikely setting for *Venus im Pelze* ("Venus in Furs"), an account of sexual slavery written by **Count Leopold von Sacher-Masoch** (1835–95). The son of the chief of police in Lemberg (Lvov), the count was allegedly influenced as a child by the brutality of the prisons. As an adult, he became professor of history at Graz University, and wrote several historical and folkloric novels. His renown today, however, rests on his affair in the 1860s with "Baroness Bogdanoff", or "Wanda" (real name Fanny Pistor), to whom the count willingly signed away his freedom – becoming her manservant, taking the name of Gregor, and embarking upon "a liaison, marked materially by a prodigality in which furs and foreign travel were to be conspicuous". She agreed to wear furs "as often as possible, especially when in a cruel mood", while he agreed to "comply unreservedly with every one of her desires and commands". After six months of slavery, the two parted company, but the affair had inspired the count to write *Venus im Pelze*, which was published in 1870. In 1873 the count married Aurore Rümelin, who changed her name to Wanda in honour of the book's heroine. "Gregor" and Wanda became involved in a weird *ménage à trois* with a fake Polish countess, Anna von Kottowitz, who turned out to be a chemist's assistant.

We have the count to thank for the term "sadomasochism", though he himself never coined the phrase. That was left to one of Freud's early mentors, Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902), who first used the term – with reference to Sacher-Masoch's numerous writings on the S&M theme – in his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, published in Latin in 1886 (but later translated into seven languages), about which the emperor Franz-Josef I once quipped, "it's about time someone brought out a decent book on Latin grammar". The same year, Sacher-Masoch split from Wanda, and he married his children's governess in 1887. He died in 1895, depressed by the decline of his reputation and by Krafft-Ebing's use of his name to designate a sexual perversion.

It's worth trekking out here for the building alone, designed in extravagant neo-Renaissance style in 1905 as the town hall for Weikersdorf, only to become redundant seven years later when Weikersdorf was subsumed into Baden. The most fascinating section of the collection within is the array of skulls, busts, brains and death masks – plus a wax model of Marie Antoinette's hand, and a plaster cast of Goethe's – amassed by **Franz-Josef Gall** (1758–1828), the local-born founder of phrenology, a pseudo-science that claimed a person's talents or criminal traits could be traced to the size of certain areas of the brain. The rest of the museum is a hotchpotch: some crystals, an Egyptian sarcophagus and a cabinet of curios from the world tour of local nineteenth-century bigwig Josef von Doblhoff.

If you'd prefer something less mentally taxing, head for the vast hot thermal open-air **swimming pool** complex, which hides behind the 1920s facade of the *Thermalstrandbad* on Helenenstrasse, or the ultra-modern, stylish indoor pool, *Römertherme* (Ⓦwww.roemertherme.at), on Brusattiplatz, which is open daily until 10pm. After your dip, you can relax in the nearby **Doblhoffpark**, a lovely mix of formal gardens and English park, with a large rosarium, a pergola and a huge, bushy plane tree at the centre. To the north is the Schloss Weikersdorf, built in the sixteenth century – you should be able to sneak a look at the arcaded courtyard – and seat of the Doblhoff family from 1741 until 1966 (it's now a hotel; see opposite). Finally, if you've time to spare, check out the latest contemporary art exhibitions in the low-slung Neoclassical **Frauenbad** (Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 3–7pm), on Josefplatz.

Practicalities

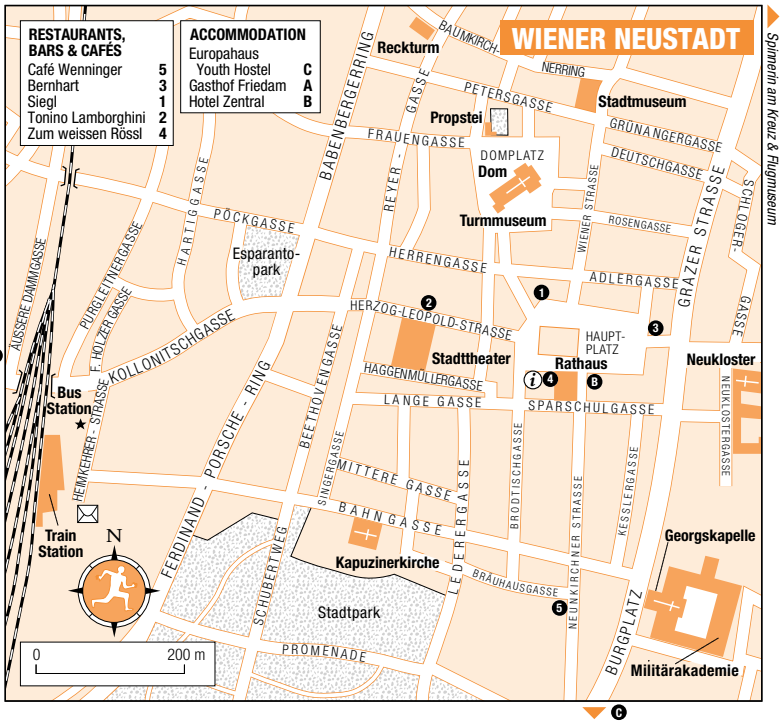
S-Bahn and regular trains from Vienna's Südbahnhof arrive at Baden's **main train station**, ten minutes' walk southeast of the town centre. Lokalbahn trams, distinguishable by their Prussian blue-and-cream livery, depart from Vienna's Staatsoper and arrive at the **station on Josefsplatz**. Baden's **tourist office** (May–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 9am–2pm; Oct–April Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; ⓣ02252/22600-600) is attractively ensconced in the Leopoldsbad, a magnolia-coloured Biedermeier building on Brusattiplatz.

There's a wide choice of **accommodation** in Baden, though much of it is in the higher price categories, with the handful of **private rooms** on offer through the tourist office the only truly inexpensive option. The rooms at *Hotel Rauch*, Pelzgasse 3 (ⓣ02252/44561, Ⓔhotel-rauch@aon.at; 4), have nice high ceilings and en-suite facilities; *Hotel Kurpark* (ⓣ02252/89104, Ⓦtiscover.com/hotel-kurpark; 4), as the name suggests, is a modern villa on the edge of the Kurpark at Welzergasse 29, with indoor and outdoor pools; and there are several pleasant garden villas along the leafy boulevard of Weilburgstrasse, such as *Villa Inge*, at nos. 24–26 (ⓣ02252/43171; 3). More upmarket accommodation can be had at the *Hotel Schloss Weikersdorf* (ⓣ02252/48301, Ⓦwww.hotelschloss weikersdorf.at; 7), a converted Renaissance castle in the Doblhoffpark (see opposite). The cheaper rooms here are in the modern annexe, *Dependance*, though all guests get free use of the sauna and pool. Another grandiose option is the palatial Biedermeier *Grandhotel Sauerhof* (ⓣ02252/41251, Ⓦwww.sauerhof.at; 9), where the composer Salieri used to stay.

The *Café Central*, on Hauptplatz (Ⓦwww.cafe-central.at; closed Mon), is a big traditional *Kaffeehaus* in the Viennese style, and a great place for watching life go by. If the weather's fine you could easily pack a picnic and head off into the woods. Alternatively, call in at the *Gasthaus zum Reichsapfel*, a homely inn just east of the Pfarrkirche, down Spiegelgasse, offering a range of beers, traditional pub fare and good veggie options; the *Amterl*, at the top of Hauptplatz (Ⓦwww.amterl.at; closed Sun), serves up nicely presented dishes, and has tables on the street. Baden is a sedate place at the best of times, and by nightfall spa patients are tucked up in bed, while everyone else heads for the town's **casino** (daily 3pm–3am; €21 minimum; Ⓦbaden.casinos.at) in the Kurhaus – you'll need jacket and tie to get in.

Wiener Neustadt

Considering that an estimated 52,000 bombs fell on the industrial town of **WIENER NEUSTADT** (Ⓦwww.wiener-neustadt.gv.at), 50km south of Vienna, during the latter stages of World War II, destroying some 88 percent of the town's buildings, the place doesn't look that bad – in fact, the pedestrianized Altstadt is even quite attractive in places. Sections of the ancient walls – erected by Babenberg Duke Leopold V in 1194 when he founded the town as a fortress on the Hungarian frontier – have survived, and there are reminders, too, of the town's fifteenth-century heyday, when it served briefly as the Habsburgs' chief residence under Emperor Friedrich III (1440–93). Later, Friedrich's old seat was turned into the Theresianische Militärakademie, where none other than the "Desert Fox", General Rommel, was once in command, and it remains a prestigious military academy to the present day. However, the reason Wiener Neustadt attracted the attentions of the Anglo-American bombers was the town's heavy industrial base, which made, among



other things, locomotives, fighter planes and armaments, and included a Daimler factory where the young Tito worked for a time.

The Town

Despite being the largest town in Lower Austria after St Pölten (see p.159), Wiener Neustadt has a surprisingly compact Altstadt, centred on the spacious **Hauptplatz**, which has kept its original arcading on two sides, and is enlivened by a small morning market (Mon–Sat 8am–noon). The prettiest building on the square is the salmon-pink **Rathaus**, featuring Ionic pilasters, a clock pediment flanked by balustrades, and a lovely little wrought-iron balcony held up by oversized brackets.

Dominating the skyline, a couple of blocks north of Hauptplatz, is the town's Romanesque **Dom**. Heavily restored in the late nineteenth century, the church's west front, with its tall twin broach spires and arch friezes, still makes a powerful impression. The west front also has an unusual miniature freestanding tower to one side, about which you can find more from the **Turmmuseum** (Tues & Wed 10am–5pm, Thurs 10am–8pm, Fri 10am–noon, Sun 10am–4pm; €2), though first you must retrieve the key from the Stadtmuseum (see opposite). Like the exterior, the Gothic interior of the Dom, with its chancel set slightly askew, is equally awesome in scale. The furnishings are mostly Baroque, but patches of medieval fresco survive, the red marble pulpit dates back to 1609, and there's a wonderful set of colourful and expressive fifteenth-century wooden statues of the twelve apostles adorning the pillars of the central aisle.

One of the best-preserved sections of the old town walls – paid for, incidentally, by the ransom money extracted from England for the release of Richard the Lionheart (see p.172) – lies to the northwest of the Dom, around the **Reckturm** (May–Oct Tues & Thurs 10am–noon & 2–4pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon; free), a corner tower now housing a small collection of medieval arms and armour. However, the collection of exhibits at the stylish **Stadtmuseum** (Tues & Wed 10am–5pm, Thurs 10am–8pm, Fri 10am–noon, Sun 10am–4pm; ☎02622/373 950, ⓦwww.stadtmuseum.wrn.at; €3), in the nearby former Dominican monastery on Petersgasse, is a lot more interesting, and includes treasures salvaged from the Dom, such as a silver-gilt medieval gospel, and two Gothic weathervanes, as well as the golden, lidded goblet donated to Wiener Neustadt by Matthias Corvinus after he had captured the town. Look out, too, for pictures of the war-damaged town, and three of the bombs that fell on the town and didn't explode.

The Militärakademie, Wappenwand and Georgskapelle

The town's most intriguing sight is hidden within the local **Militärakademie** (Military Academy; open daily for free 30-minute tours by appointment ☎02622/381 2050), established in 1752 in the old imperial residence on the southeast corner of the town centre. The building began life as a thirteenth-century castle, but was considerably enlarged by Emperor Friedrich III, when he decided to establish his court here in the 1450s. Sadly, an earthquake in 1768, and the bombing raids of World War II, destroyed much of the building's original appearance, but it's still worth visiting, if only for the surreal experience of being guided round by one of the soldiers on duty. To get inside, you must announce yourself to the guard at the Südtor or Osttor (if the gate is closed, ring the bell).

On the west side of the main courtyard is the **Wappenwand**, or Heraldic Wall, an impressive display of noble might, in which the castle chapel's central window is framed by carved reliefs of over one hundred coats of arms from all of Friedrich's territories and connections, real or imagined. At the base of the wall is a statue of Friedrich, with his cryptic monogram, **AEIOU** (see box, p.210).

Behind the Wappenwand, on the first floor, Friedrich built the **Georgskapelle**, dedicated to the emperor's favourite saint, George, in whose honour he founded a new order of chivalry. Though heavily restored inside – the soldier will show you photos of the extent of the bomb damage in 1945 – the chapel has miraculously retained a set of superb fifteenth- and sixteenth-century stained-glass windows, which were wisely stored underground for the duration of the war. Otherwise, only the marble font and one column, decorated with colourful frescoes, survive from the original church. Friedrich's son, Maximilian I (1493–1519), was born here and spent his childhood playing mock jousts and war games outside the castle gates; his remains are buried beneath a modern graveslab behind the main altar, though his splendid mausoleum lies in Innsbruck (see p.472).

The Neukloster, Spinnerin am Kreuz and Flugmuseum

One other work of art from Friedrich's day that's worth seeking out is the beautiful red-marble tombstone of the emperor's beloved Portuguese wife, Eleonore, which lies in the lugubrious Gothic church of **Neukloster**, a short walk north of the Militärakademie. To get to see the tombstone, stroll out into the vine-clad cloister to the south and back into the church behind the main altar. Opposite her finely carved tombstone are the graveslabs of the three of her five children who died in infancy.

AEIOU

The mysterious acronym **AEIOU**, which became the emperor Friedrich III's personal logo, was emblazoned on everything from library books to new buildings, and can still be seen at several locations across Austria, most notably on his tomb in Vienna's Stephansdom, and his mausoleum in Graz's Domkirche. Composed of all the vowels of the Roman alphabet (in which the letters "u" and "v" are both rendered as "V"), it is open to various interpretations, ranging from the obvious *Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima* (Austria will be last in the world), to the ingenious *Aquila Electa Iovis Omnia Vincit* (The chosen eagle conquers all things). Friedrich himself revealed the German version to be *Alles Erdreich Ist Österreich Untertan* (The whole world is subject to Austria), though some wags put forward the more appropriate *Aller Erst Ist Österreich Verloren* (In the first place, Austria is lost), since Friedrich had great difficulty in keeping hold of his Austrian lands, losing Vienna to the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus in 1485 and his beloved Wiener Neustadt the following year.

Another exceptional work of Gothic art that predates even Friedrich's reign, the **Spinnerin am Kreuz** (Spinner at the Cross), stands 1km north of the Altstadt, set back from the busy Wiener Strasse. Donated by the local judge in the late fourteenth century, it is a highly ornate wayside column decorated with blind arcading and pinnacles.

Another 2km north, in a godforsaken industrial estate off the Wiener Strasse, is the town's **Flugmuseum** (Tues–Sun 10am–7pm; Ⓦwww.aviaticum.at; €4.50), housed in a hangar alongside an airfield busy with light aircraft. The majority of planes on display are, in fact, gliders, though there are plenty of parachutes, ripcords, altimeters, balloon baskets, model planes and uniforms to keep most plane-spotters happy. To get to the museum, there's a half-hourly bus from Hauptplatz (Mon–Sat).

Practicalities

The **train** and **bus station** are next door to each other ten minutes' walk west of the Hauptplatz, where you'll find the **tourist office**, housed next door to the Rathaus (Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 8am–noon; Ⓣ02622/373311, Ⓦwww.tiscover.at/wiener.neustadt). Wiener Neustadt sees few tourists, so the choice of **accommodation** is fairly limited; it's the sort of place that's best visited on a day-trip from Baden or Vienna. The cheapest place **to stay** is the simple, family-run *Gasthof Friedam* (Ⓣ02622/23081; ❷), a local pub with rooms, located in the backstreets, fifteen minutes' walk west of the train station at Schneeberggasse 18. The pick of the town's handful of hotels is *Hotel Zentral* (Ⓣ02622/23169, Ⓦwww.hotel-zentral.tos.at; ❹), on the main square at Hauptplatz 27, which has lots character and a great central location. The town also has an **HI hostel**, *Europahaus* (Ⓣ02622/29695, Ⓔoffice.2700@hostel.or.at; ❷), situated in the park near the distinctive chalice-shaped water tower, south of the Militärakademie. Reception is open from 7am to 10am, and from 5.30pm to 7.30pm, but ring ahead before turning up as the place is often full.

Several **cafés** spill out onto Hauptplatz in the warmer weather. The *Bernhart* (closed Sun), on the east side, is the most venerable Kaffeehaus, but for value you're better off snacking on crostini at the stylish *Siegl*, on the opposite side. For the complete Kaffeehaus experience, head for the smoke-filled booths of *Café Wenninger*, Neunkirchnerstr 36, near the Militärakademie, a sepia-coloured place with lots of newspapers, and a chance to play backgammon and billiards. *Zum weissen Rössl* (closed Sun), by the Rathaus, is a traditional pub serving

inexpensive and filling **food**. Another possibility is *Tonio Lamborghini*, Herzog-Leopold-Str 18 (closed Sun & Mon), an *alimentari* and small café serving delicious filled fresh pasta and salads.

Beyond Wiener Neustadt: Schneeberg, Semmering Pass and Raxalpe

South and west of Wiener Neustadt, you begin to enter the alpine foothills that form the border between Lower Austria and Styria. The main autobahn to Graz heads south through the undulating countryside of the Bucklige Welt (literally "Bumpy World"), but the more spectacular route by road and rail is via the **Semmering Pass**. As the nearest alpine resort to the capital, **Semmering** has long been a popular holiday destination with the Viennese, though it's really the rail journey there that is the main attraction. In addition, the two highest mountain ranges in the vicinity, the evil-sounding **Raxalpe** and the more benevolent **Schneeberg**, can be ascended via chairlift and cog railway respectively.

Puchberg am Schneeberg

The **steam cog railway**, which climbs Lower Austria's highest mountain range of Schneeberg, has been a popular day-trip since its completion in 1897. The **Schneebergbahn** (late-April to late-Oct 10–11 trains daily; €30 return; Ⓦwww.schneebergbahn.at) departs from the village of **PUCHBERG AM SCHNEEBERG** (Ⓦwww.puchberg.at), itself accessible by regular train from Wiener Neustadt 30km to the west. The cog railway (Zahnradbahn) then wiggles its way along 9km of track ascending over 1200m to the top station of Hochschneeberg (1796m). Two types of train take the strain: on Sundays in July and August, the original steam engine (Nostalgie-Dampfzug) takes eighty minutes of huffing and puffing; the rest of the time a diesel painted like a salamander takes just fifty minutes. The view from the top is pretty impressive, but if the weather's clear it's worth walking onwards to one of the nearby viewpoints: the highest peak of the **Schneeberg** range, **Klosterwappen** (2076m), is an hour's hike from the top of the railway, and gives views over to the Raxalpe (see p.213); the right-hand fork is less strenuous, and will take you to the *Fischerhütte* restaurant, just over two kilometres away, and beyond, to the Kaiserstein (2061m).

If you're planning a **day-trip** from either Wiener Neustadt or Vienna, it's worth picking up the Schneebergbahn leaflet, which lists train connections. If you want to do some hiking from the top station, or simply want to take it easy, it's probably best to stay the night somewhere near Puchberg. En-suite **rooms** at the traditional *Landgasthof Hausmann* (Ⓣ02636/2231; ③) are good value, while *Pension Bruckerhof* (Ⓣ02636/2315; ③) has comfortable rooms with geranium-festooned balconies. *Hausmann* (closed Mon & Sun eve) is one of a dozen inns in town with **restaurants** serving reasonable Austrian food; prices here and elsewhere are around the €10 mark for most main courses.

Semmering

The rail line over the 985-metre **Semmering Pass** to the Styrian town of Mürzzuschlag is another spectacular feat of engineering. Completed in 1854, it was one of the first railways to forge its way across an alpine pass, employing

seventeen tunnels and numerous switchbacks and viaducts; the most scenic stretch of track is the final section between Payerbach and **SEMMERING**. A pleasant, if somewhat amorphous resort, Semmering lies strung out along the northern slopes of the pass, and is dotted with attractive turn-of-the-twentieth-century villas. Hovering at around 1000m, and famed for its clean air, it has also been a very popular spa with the Viennese for nearly 150 years.

Semmering's **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm; ⓣ02664/20025, ⓦwww.semmering.at) is by the main road at the top of the

▲ Schneebergbahn

pass (Passhöhe). The Hochstrasse begins opposite and is lined with an enormous choice of **accommodation**. *Haus Kohl,* Hochstr 330 (☎02664/2502; ❸), is the least expensive, but clean and friendly. A couple of notches up in the luxury stakes is the highly recommended *Hotel Belvedere* (☎02664/2270, ⓦwww.semmering.at/hotel-belvedere; ❻), which has a sauna, pool and excellent **restaurant**. Further still up the star ratings are the luxurious *Panhans* itself (☎02664/81810, ⓦwww.panhans.at; summer ❼; winter ❾), or the smaller no-smoking *Panoramahotel Wagner* (☎02664/2512-0, ⓦwww.panoramahotel-wagner.at; ❼). But for even better panoramas hike an hour and a half up the Panhaus trail from behind the church on the Hochstrasse to the *Schutzhaus Pinkenkogel* (☎0676/302 0066, ⓦhome.arcor.de/pinkenkogel; May to mid-Nov daily; mid-Nov to April Thurs–Sun only), an alpine cabin at the summit of the Pinkenkogel (1291m).

Höllental and Raxalpe

The River Schwarza cuts a very narrow and dramatic defile, known as the **Höllental** (Valley of Hell), between the limestone massifs of Schneeberg, to the north, and the **Raxalpe**, to the south. The twenty-kilometre section between Reichenau and Schwarzau is popular with cyclists (and car drivers), but most folk only make it as far as the **Raxseilbahn** (daily: Feb, March, Sept & Oct 8.30am–5pm; April–Aug 8am–5pm; Nov–Jan 9am–4.30pm; ⓦwww.raxseilbahn.com; €18 return), Austria's first ever cable car, which opened in 1926, and sets off from just beyond the village of Hirschwang, 3km west of Reichenau. The cable car climbs just over 1000m, leaving you half an hour's hike from the Jakobskogel (1737m), and around two hours from the highest peak of the range, **Heukuppe** (2007m), on the Styrian side of the Raxalpe. If you want to ascend Schneeberg from the Höllental, you'll have to rely on your legs: a marked path sets off from *Naturfreundhaus Weichtal*, 6km beyond the Raxseilbahn; it takes roughly two hours to reach the summit of Klosterwappen (see p.211).

As buses along the Höllental are infrequent, your best bet if you want to explore the valley is to hire a **bike** from the train station at Payerbach (Semmering train station doesn't offer bike rental). Just south of Payerbach, in the hamlet of Kreuzberg, you can **stay** at the *Looshaus* (☎02666/52911, ⓦwww.looshaus.at; ❺), a surprisingly rustic villa designed by the Austrian father of modernism, Adolf Loos, in the 1930s, with good views over the surrounding countryside.

Travel details

Trains

Gmünd (NÖ) to: Weitra (3–6 daily; 20min).
Horn to: Gars-Thurnau (every 1–2hr; 15min); Krems an der Donau (every 2hr; 1hr); Rosenburg (every 1–2hr; 10min).
Krems an der Donau to: Emmersdorf (every 1–2hr; 50min); Dürnstein (every 1–2hr; 10min); Gars-Thurnau (every 2hr; 55min); Marbach-Maria Taferl (1–4 daily; 1hr 25min); Rosenburg (every 1–2hr; 1hr); St Pölten (every 40min–1hr; 35–45min); Spitz an der Donau (every 1–2hr; 25min); Tulln (hourly; 40min); Wagram-Grafenegg (every 2hr; 20min); Weissenkirchen (every 1–2hr; 20min).
Retz to: Drosendorf (up to every 2hr; 1hr); Geras-Kottaun (up to every 2hr; 45min); Znojmo (3–5 daily; 25min).
St Pölten to: Herzogenburg (1–2hr; 12min); Melk (1–2hr; 15–20min); Mariazell (6–7 daily; 2hr 40min); Pöchlarn (1–2hr; 20–25min); Tulln (every 2hr; 1hr).
Vienna (Franz-Josefs Bahnhof) to: Eggenburg (hourly; 1hr–1hr 20min); Gmünd (NÖ) (every 2hr;

2hr–2hr 20min); Graz (22 daily; 2hr 40min); Klosterneuburg-Kierling (every 30min; 15min); Krems an der Donau (hourly; 1hr–1hr 15min); Mistelbach (hourly; 55min); Tulln (every 30min; 30–45min).

Vienna (Südbahnhof) to: Baden (every 30min; 30min); Bruck an der Leitha (every 30min; 25–35min); Laa an der Thaya (hourly; 2hr); Marchegg (7–12 daily; 45min); Mödling (every 15min; 25min); Payerbach-Reichenau (hourly; 1hr 30min–2hr); Semmering (hourly; 2hr) Wiener Neustadt (every 30min; 50min).

Vienna (Westbahnhof) to: Melk (every 1–2hr; 1hr); Pöchlarn (every 1–2hr; 1hr 15min); St Pölten (1–2hr; 40min).

Vienna (Wien-Nord) to: Bad Deutsch Altenburg (hourly; 1hr 10min); Hainburg Ungartor (hourly; 1hr 15min); Petronell-Carnuntum (hourly; 1hr 5min); Retz (every 2hr; 1hr 5min).

Waidhofen an der Ybbs to: Lunz am See (5–8 daily; 1hr 30min).

Wiener Neustadt to: Payerbach-Reichenau (every 30min; 30min); Puchberg-am-Schneeberg (hourly; 45min); Semmering (hourly; 1hr).

Buses

Horn to: Drosendorf (Mon–Sat 1–2 daily; 1hr); Laa an der Thaya (Mon–Fri 3 daily; 1hr 20min); Raabs an der Thaya (1–2 daily; 1hr 15min); Vienna (1–4 daily; 2hr 30min).

Krems an der Donau to: Langenlois (28 daily; 20min); Melk (3–4 daily; 1hr).

Lackenhof to: Gaming (5 daily; 30min); Lunz am See (5 daily; 30min).

Mödling to: Heiligenkreuz (Mon–Fri 10 daily; Sat 5 daily; Sun 7 daily; 15min); Laxenburg (Mon–Fri every 30min, Sat & Sun hourly; 20min).

Orth an der Donau to: Bad Deutsch Altenburg (1–2 daily; 45min); Eckartsau (1–2 daily; 15min); Hainburg (1–2 daily; 55min). Raestrud tinci

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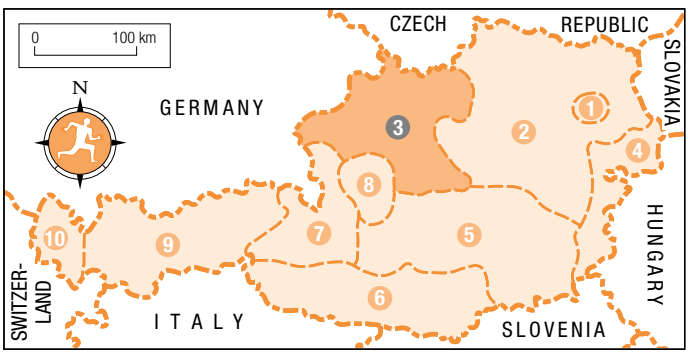
Upper Austria



CHAPTER 3

Highlights

- **Ars Electronica Linz** Interact with our high-tech future at this exceptional museum. See p.223
- **Stift St Florian** Austria's most celebrated abbey, thanks most famously to the attentions of Anton Bruckner. See p.228
- **KZ Mauthausen** Sobering and moving, a visit to this concentration camp is an unpleasant but important experience. See p.230
- **Freistädter Bier** One of several traditional local brews to try as you travel around, this beer comes from a brewery that's been communally owned since 1777. See p.232
- **Steyr** A beautiful town with a magnificent central square and an excellent industry museum. See p.233
- **Stift Kremsmünster** This huge abbey is off the beaten path but worth the trek particularly for its Baroque fish ponds and observatory. See p.236
- **The Danube Cycleway** One of Europe's most rewarding cycle-touring routes, it's suitable for all abilities and levels of experience. See p.242

▲ Steyr

3

Upper Austria

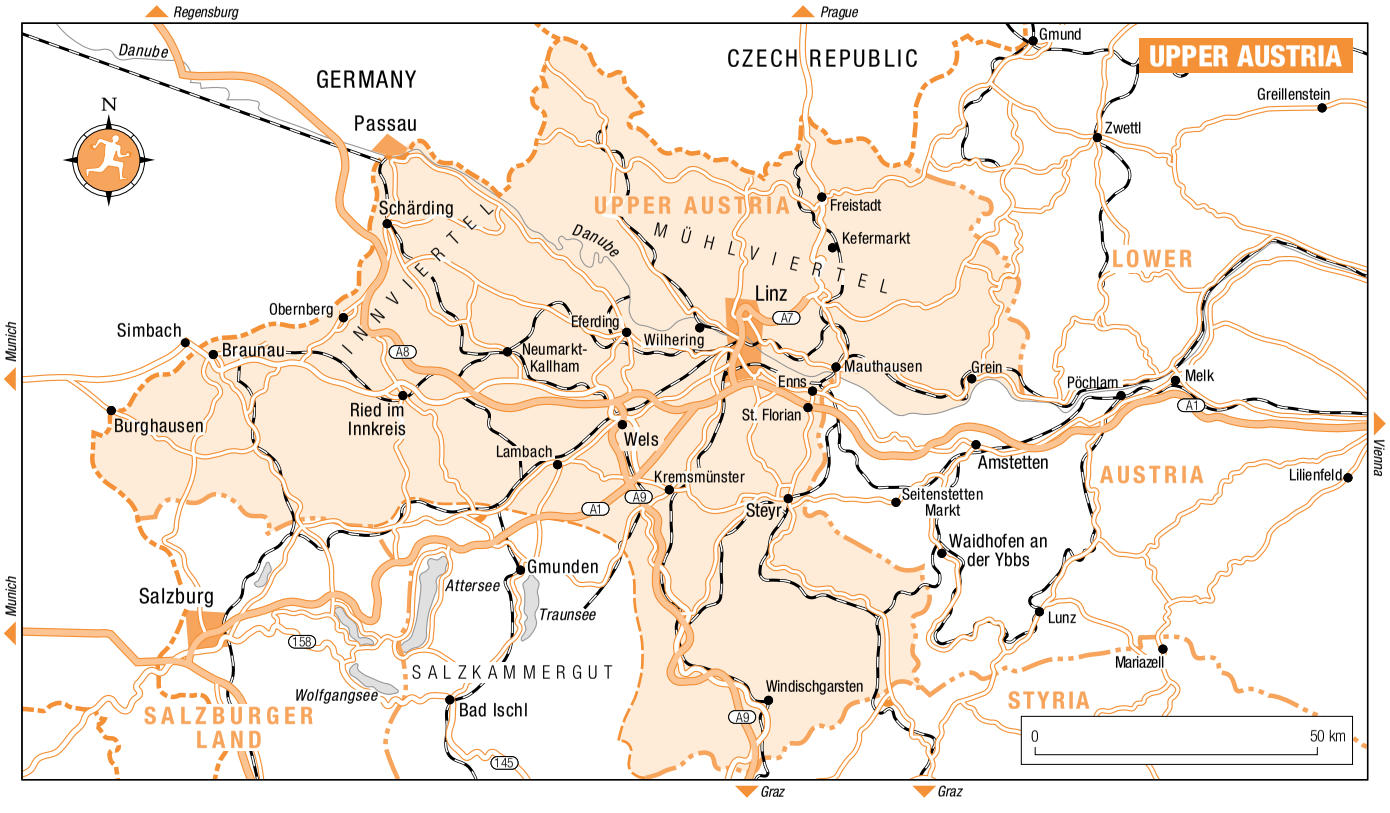
Upper Austria (*Oberösterreich*; ⓦwww.oberoesterreich.at) shares a great deal, both politically and geographically, with neighbouring Lower Austria. Although fought over for centuries by the Bavarians and Habsburgs, it has remained in Habsburg hands since the thirteenth century. The landscape is largely characterized by rolling farmland, generally overlooked by those drawn to Austria's mountainscapes. Visitors are concentrated in the rugged south of the province, in the lakeland known as the **Salzkammergut**, covered in Chapter 8. Fewer make it to the neighbouring **Kalkalpen** national park, which embraces the Sengsengebirge mountains and Austria's largest area of protected forest. Austrians themselves regard Upper Austria as a rural backwater, the Land capital **Linz** overlooked because of its industry. Yet Linz has a fine Altstadt, one of Europe's most innovative museums, **Ars Electronica**, and has been selected as European City of Culture 2009, so perhaps perceptions will change.

Upper Austria is replete with monasteries that were transformed into Baroque showpieces during the Counter-Reformation. **St Florian** is the best known thanks to its associations with Anton Bruckner, but the Rococo masterpiece of **Wilhering**, and **Kremsmünster**, with its remarkable fish basins, art collection and observatory, are equally stunning. All three are within easy reach of Linz. So is Austria's most notorious concentration camp, **Mauthausen**.

After Linz, Upper Austria has just two towns of any size: **Wels**, with a handsome Altstadt and impressive Roman remains, and **Steyr**, the more compelling of the two, with a splendid location at the confluence of the Enns and Steyr rivers. You could see either on a day-trip from Linz, but Steyr, in particular, makes a pleasant overnight halt. There are plenty of picturesque walled towns dotted about the province, none large but each a minor gem. If you're heading in or out of the Czech Republic, the fortified town of **Freistadt** is a worthwhile stop-off. Likewise, if you're travelling to or from Germany, you've a choice of picture-perfect towns along the banks of the Inn, from **Braunau-am-Inn**, Hitler's pretty birthplace, to **Schärding**, close to the German town of Passau.

Linz

LINZ is Austria's third city and its most overtly industrial, a down-to-earth working town far removed from the usual tourist image of Austria; approaching from the east it's impossible to ignore the chemical plants, steelworks and dockyards . In contrast, the approach from the west along the Danube is idyllic,


Regensburg
Prague
Danube
GERMANY
CZECH REPUBLIC
Gmund
UPPER AUSTRIA
Greillenstein
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Schärding
UPPER AUSTRIA
Freistadt
Danube
INNVIERTEL
MÜHLVIERTEL
Kefermarkt
LOWER
Linz
Obernberg
Simbach
Braunau
Eferding
Wilhering
A7
A8
Neumarkt-
Kallham
Mauthausen
Grein
Pöchlarn
Melk
Enns
A1
Munich
Burghausen
Ried im
Innkreis
St. Florian
Wels
Lambach
Amstetten
AUSTRIA
Vienna
Lilienfeld
Kremsmünster
A9
A1
Steyr
Seitenstetten
Markt
Waidhofen an
der Ybbs
Munich
Salzburg
Gmunden
Attersee
Traunsee
Lunz
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Mariazell
SALZKAMMERGUT
Windischgarsten
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Wolfgangsee
Bad Ischl
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A9
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145
Graz
Graz

while the attractive **Altstadt** is the focus for a lively nightlife scene. Stuck with the PR nightmare of being "Hitler's home town", Linz nowadays projects a more progressive image, with a remarkable museum, **Ars Electronica**, dedicated to the "virtual" arts, that alone justifies a visit. This, a sprinkling of tourist sights and the buzz accompanying Linz's selection as European City of Culture 2009 ensure there's plenty to keep you amused for a few days.

Some history

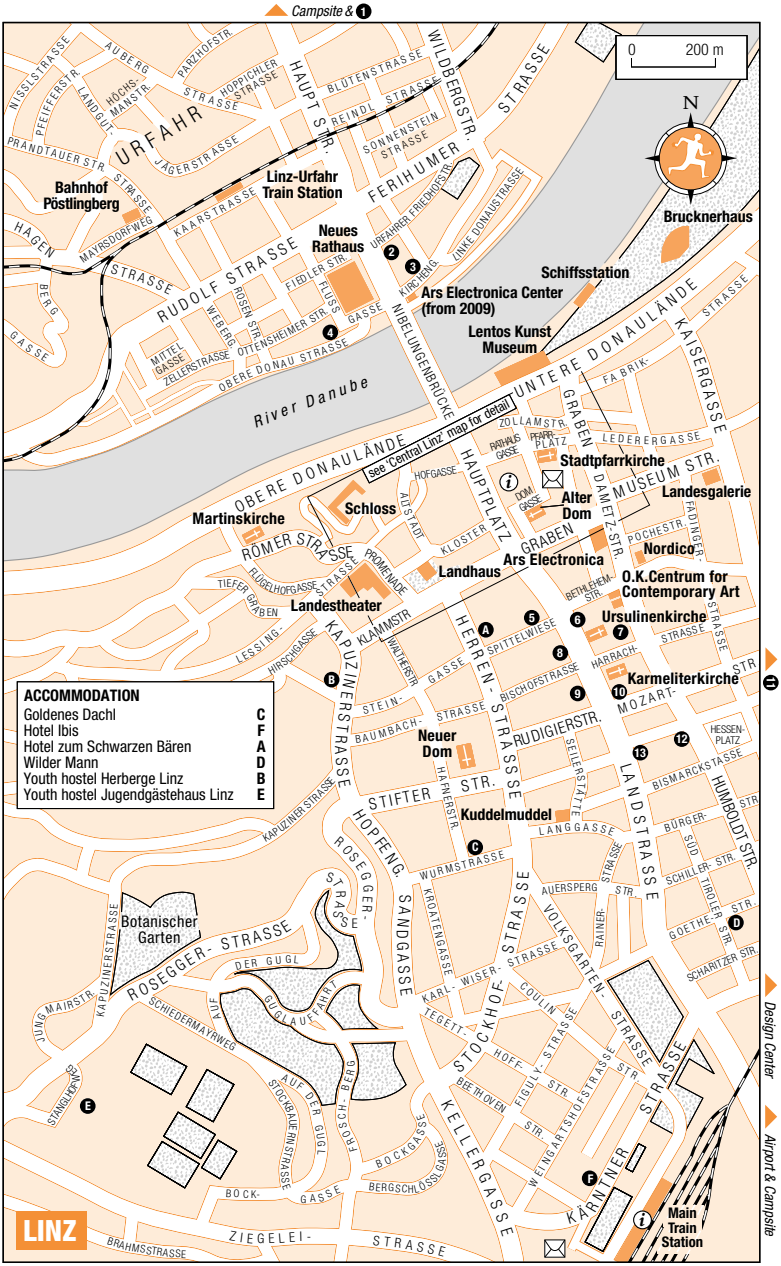
Linz began as the Roman port of **Lentia**, later becoming a major medieval trading centre, controlled first by the bishops of Passau, and later by the Babenbergs. Apart from its brief stint as imperial capital under the emperor Friedrich III from 1489 to 1493, however, the city was best known for its peasant revolts. Along with much of Upper Austria, Linz became a bastion of Protestantism following the Reformation, hosting an important Protestant confederation in 1614, and attracting the Lutheran astronomer **Johannes Kepler** to work in the city. In 1626, an estimated 16,000 local peasants revolted against the Catholicizing policies of Maximilian of Bavaria and besieged Linz. In the end, the Bavarians relieved the city, though at considerable cost. More than two hundred buildings were destroyed, and most of the merchant families fled, leaving Linz to languish as a provincial backwater.

It was the city's strategic position as a bridge over the Danube that ensured its resurgence. In 1832, the continent's first horse-drawn railway was built between Linz and the Bohemian town of Budweis (České Budějovice), and by the century's end the city was the empire's largest railway junction. At the same time Linz became a musical centre thanks to the presence of Anton Bruckner, who took the post of cathedral organist. Like the rest of Austria, Linz was torn between left- and right-wing paramilitary groups during the 1920s and 1930s, with violent skirmishes frequently played out on the streets. On February 12, 1934, the country was plunged into civil war when a dawn raid by the right-wing *Heimwehr* on a socialist weapons cache in the *Hotel Schiff*, on the corner of Landstrasse and Mozartstrasse, was met with armed resistance. Although widespread, the fighting in Linz was over in a day, ending in defeat for the *Schutzbund*, the paramilitary wing of the socialists.

Despite the delirious reception given to Hitler when he addressed a 40,000-strong crowd in Linz after the **Nazi invasion** of March 1938, Linz had not been a Nazi stronghold during the 1930s. It was, however, keenly anti-Semitic. Of the local community of 600 Jews at the time of Anschluss, half emigrated and only thirteen returned in 1945 – though Hitler's childhood family doctor, Eduard Bloch, was left unmolested on the Führer's orders. Economically, Linz benefited enormously under the Nazis; Hermann Göring founded the iron and steelworks. After the war, Linz was divided between the **Soviet and American sectors**, with Urfahr on the Danube's north bank occupied by the Russians, and the city proper controlled by the US. In 1955, the occupation forces withdrew, and since then Linz – politically these days a stronghold of the left-of-centre SPÖ – has enjoyed a peaceful and increasingly prosperous existence.

Arrival, information and transport

Linz's Blue Danube **airport** (Ⓦwww.linz-airport.com) is 10km southwest of the city in Hörsching. Buses (Mon–Fri 6am–7pm; €2.40 one-way) ply the route into the centre, a trip for which taxis charge around €25 – alternatively, you could take the free bus to Hörsching station (5am–10pm) and ride into town by train. **Trains** arrive at Linz's modern **Hauptbahnhof**, 2km south of the city



RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS							
Biergartl	4	Gelbes Krokodil	7	Klosterhof	8	Papa Joe's	10
Café Landgraf	2	Josef	13	Los Caballeros	9	Posthof	11
Extrablatt	5	Kitty Kiernan's	12	Marcelli	6	Strom	3
						Verdi	1

centre; buses arrive and depart from the adjacent transport interchange. From late April to early October passenger **boats** operated by Wurm and Köck (☎0732/783607, ⓦwww.donauschiffahrt.de) chug along the Danube with daily services to Passau and weekly sailings to Krems and Vienna. Boats dock at the *Schiffsstation* east of the Nibelungenbrücke, a short walk from Hauptplatz.

The **tourist office**, in the Altes Rathaus on Hauptplatz (May–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat & Sun 10am–7pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm; ☎0732/7070-1777, ⓦwww.linz.at), has a wealth of information on the city and region. It also sells the worthwhile *Linz City Ticket* (€20) which includes entry to twelve museums (also available with the €12 *Museumskarte*), zoo and botanical gardens, rides on the Pöstlingbergbahn and on a yellow sightseeing train that loops around the centre, and a voucher for €10 for use in some of the city's restaurants.

From the station it's a longish walk into town (and to most of the accommodation), so you might prefer to take the **tram** (ⓦwww.linzag.at). From the station's lower concourse, follow signs for "Strassenbahn-Richtung Zentrum" down to the platform and take any city-bound tram up Landstrasse, purchasing your ticket from the machines on the platform before boarding. A "Mini" ticket (€0.80) is valid for four stops, which is enough to get you to Taubenmarkt, a short walk from Hauptplatz. Longer journeys (including those involving a change of bus or tram) require a "Midi" ticket (€1.60); alternatively, buy a 24-hour *Tageskarte* for €3.20.

Accommodation

Accommodation in Linz is very reasonably priced for a major city, though the tourist office does not offer private rooms and the selection of hotels in the centre is limited. There are two **youth hostels**: *Herberge Linz*, Kapuzinerstr 14 (☎0699/11807003) is small, friendly and five minutes' walk from the centre, with singles, doubles and dorms; if it's full, head for the *Jugendgästehaus Linz*, Stanglhofweg 3 (☎0732/664434; ⓦwww.oejhv.or.at; early Jan to mid-Dec), off Roseggerstrasse, 2km southwest of the centre (bus #27 from the train station), which has en-suite doubles (②) as well as some singles and dorm beds.

The city's main **campsite** (☎0732/305314; March–Nov) is by the Pichlinger See in the suburb of Pichling, 5km southeast of the centre (bus #19 from the Hauptbahnhof), but it's too close to the motorway for comfort. For a more peaceful site, for tents only, head to the *Pleschinger See* (☎0732/247870), 5km northeast of the centre (bus #33 or #33a from Reindlstrasse in Urfahr; by car follow the 125 northeast out of town).

Hotels and pensions

Goldener Anker Hofgasse 5 ☎0732/771088, ⓦwww.oberoesterreich.at/goldener-anker. Old, family-run Gasthof in the Altstadt. A choice of bargain rooms with shared facilities, or cosier en suites with TV and breakfast. ③

Goldenes Dachl Hafnerstr 27 ☎0732/775897, ⓦwww.oberoesterreich.at/goldenes-dachl. Plain, clean rooms over a simple Gasthaus, at bargain prices. Conveniently located midway between the station and Hauptplatz. ③

Hotel Drei mohren Promenade 17 ☎0732/772 6260, ⓦwww.drei-mohren.at. Comfortable family-run four star hotel with a great, central location and pleasantly modernized interior; all rooms are en suite. ⑧

Hotel Ibis Kärntnerstr 18–20 ☎0732/69401, ⓦwww.ibishotel.com. Comfortable mid-range chain hotel near the station, with parking and wireless Internet. ⑥

Hotel Mühlviertlerhof Graben 24 ☎0732/772268, ⓦwww.hotel-muehlviertlerhof.at. Tastefully modernized, swish hotel, right in the centre, with some themed rooms and en-suite facilities and TV in all rooms. Rates include breakfast. ⑥

Hotel Wolfinger Hauptplatz 19 ☎0732/773 2910, ⓦwww.hotelwolfinger.at. Wonderful former

nunnery, with a tasteful mix of antique and repro furniture. Rates include a breakfast buffet. 6

Hotel zum Schwarzen Bären Herrenstr 9–11 ⓣ0732/772 4770, ⓦwww.linz-hotel.at. Conveniently central three star hotel with en-suite facilities, parking and wireless Internet. 5

Wilder Mann Goethestr 14 ⓣ0732/656078. No-frills Gasthof, 5min walk from the train station, and a block east of Landstr. Some rooms have a shower but none has en-suite WC. 3

The City

Linz's main thoroughfare is the kilometre-long **Landstrasse**, traffic-free for the most part, except for trams and buses, and lined with shops, cafés and department stores. For such a large city, Linz's **Altstadt**, at the northern end of Landstrasse, is remarkably small: Graben and Promenade follow the line of the old city walls. Just about everything of interest on this side of the river lies within walking distance of the showpiece main square, **Hauptplatz**. North of here, on the banks of the Danube, is the city's top art gallery, the Lentos Kunstmuseum, while a short walk across the Nibelungenbrücke brings you to **Urfahr**, once a separate town, now a workaday suburb..

The Altstadt

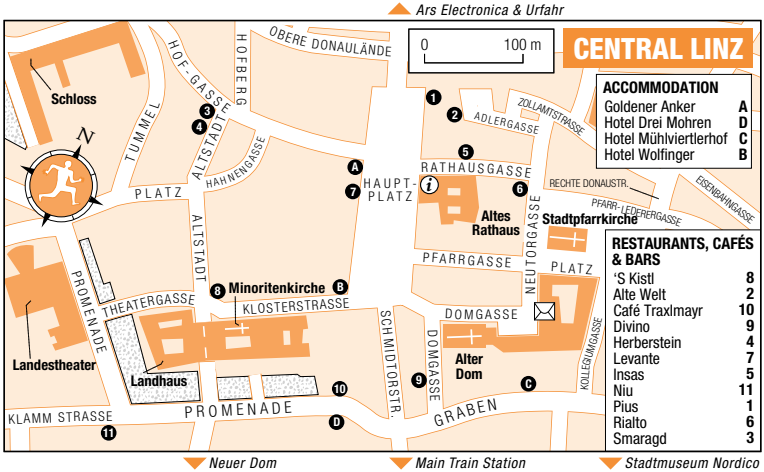
Linz's rectangular **Hauptplatz** is one of the finest squares in Austria, with its tall, pastel-coloured facades and a vast, marble Trinity column, crowned by a gilded sunburst, as the perfect centrepiece. Busy day and night, it comes into its own as the site of the city's Christmas market. Few of the buildings stand out individually, with the exception of the **Altes Rathaus**, on whose balcony Hitler appeared after his triumphant homecoming in March 1938 (see box, p.224) to greet the delirious crowds. As well as housing the tourist office, the Rathaus houses **Linz Genesis** (Mon–Fri 9am–1pm & 2–6pm; free), a museum tracing the city's history in imaginative multimedia style.

Rising above the southeast corner of Hauptplatz are the twin towers of the pea-green **Alter Dom** (daily 7am–7pm; free), where the composer Anton Bruckner was organist from 1856 to 1868. Built by the Jesuits at the zenith of their power in the 1670s, it was taken off them in 1773, and given cathedral status in the following decade, only to be returned to them in 1909 when the cathedral was superseded by the Neuer Dom. The white stucco-work on the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the nave is outstanding, as are the finely carved choir stalls, peppered with grotesques and grimacing cherubs, and the magnificent black and gold pulpit.

Round the corner from the Alter Dom is the smaller, rather gloomy Gothic-Baroque **Stadtpfarrkirche**. Its chief claim to fame is the red marble slab to the right of the high altar, behind which the heart of Emperor Friedrich III is buried (he died in Linz in 1493, but the rest of him was buried in Vienna's Stephansdom). More memorable is the marble-clad chapel in the southwest corner, with its trompe l'oeil dome and statue of St John of Nepomuk by Georg Raphael Donner.

No Austrian city would be complete without a Mozart link, and Linz's is commemorated at Klostergasse 20, known as the **Mozarthaus**, where the composer stayed in 1783. He was due to give a concert and, having no other symphony with him, knocked out his 36th (now known as the *Linz*) at breakneck speed – in about four days. Across the street is the **Minoritenkirche** (daily 8am–4pm; free), its small Rococo interior lined with pinkish side altars culminating in a high altar that froths with gilded clouds, cherubs and angels.

Next door stands the regional parliament, or **Landhaus**, a vast complex intended as a Minorite monastery, but bought by the locals in 1564. Very little remains from that period, save for the splendid red-marble entrance portal on



Klostergasse, with its triumphal-arch motif and Dutch gable. The courtyard to the right preserves its triple-decker Renaissance loggia on two sides, and has at its centre the *Planetenbrunnen*, from 1582, a fountain whose figures each represent one of the seven planets then known.

The Schloss and Martinskirche

From the Landhaus, it's a short stroll north through the most picturesque of the Altstadt's narrow streets up to the city's fortress-like renaissance **Schloss** (Tues–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; €4.50), originally built by Emperor Friedrich III. Having been kicked out of most of eastern Austria by the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus, Friedrich retreated to Linz in 1489 and, according to his enemies, spent his days collecting mouse droppings and catching flies, before dying of gout in 1493. Later, the castle was used as a hospital, a prison and a barracks, until it finally became a museum in 1963. The eclectic collections of art, folklore and weaponry repay selective viewing; major construction work to extend the museum means that for the next few years some of the highlights – including the castle's eighteenth-century apothecary and a selection of paintings by Makart, Klimt, Schiele, Gerstl and Kokoschka – are unlikely to be on view. The programme of interesting temporary exhibitions continues as normal.

A short walk west up Römerstrasse is Austria's oldest church, the diminutive **Martinskirche**. Originally a much larger, eighth-century Carolingian construction, built using the ruins of a Roman wall, it's over-restored and, its age aside, not terribly distinguished. You can peek through the glass doors to see the patchy frescoes contemporary with the fifteenth-century choir, and the modern stained glass.

South of the Altstadt

South of the Altstadt the intersection of Landstrasse, Promenade and Graben, known as Taubenmarkt, marks the nerve centre of the city, dominated by large stores and the Passage shopping centre. A block east at Graben 15 is the temporary home of the **Ars Electronica Center** (Wed–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm; €6; ⓦ www.aec.at), relocated here until work is completed on its permanent home at the north end of the Nibelungenbrücke in 2009. The aim is to extend and transform the original riverside structure into an architectural

Hitler's Heimatstadt

Although **Adolf Hitler** (1889–1945) was born in Braunau (see p.240), he considered Linz his home town. At first the family lived in the village of Leonding, 5km southwest of Linz. Hitler commuted to the Linz Realschule from 1900, but was forced to leave in 1904 (the year that philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein entered the school), after failing his exams twice. He fared little better at the Steyr Realschule, where his first report card was so bad he got drunk and used the document as toilet paper, forcing him to ask for a duplicate. His father died shortly afterwards, and Hitler left school without graduating, moving with the rest of the family to Humboldtstr 31 in Linz. The future Führer spent the next few years going to the opera, sketching and daydreaming.

Hitler left Linz in an unsuccessful attempt to enter art school in Vienna, beginning a period of rootless drifting which ended with the outbreak of World War I. Finding himself in Germany, he enthusiastically joined the German army hoping the conflict would give his life meaning and purpose. After the war, he stayed on in Munich; most German-speaking subjects of the former Habsburg Empire regarded Germany as their natural motherland after the Empire's collapse and Hitler was no exception, subsequently exploiting the discontent of Germany's war veterans to mould the movement that became the Nazi Party.

Some thirty years after leaving Linz, Hitler returned in triumph on **March 12, 1938**. Driving into the Hauptplatz the dictator was greeted by such wildly jubilant crowds that he decided, there and then, to go for a full Anschluss – the incorporation of Austria into the Third Reich: "the cares and troubles of this city are over because I have assumed its personal protection," he declared over dinner at the *Hotel Weinzinger*. Two days later, after paying his respects to his parents' graves in Leonding, Hitler continued on his triumphal journey to Vienna.

Though he rarely returned home as Führer, Hitler had elaborate **plans for Linz**, which he was going to transform into a "Second Budapest", with a new opera house, theatre, concert hall, university, art gallery, museum, park and boulevard. Within days of the Anschluss, engineers arrived to draw up plans for a new Nibelungenbrücke (designed years before by Hitler himself). Among the Führer's more fanciful proposals was the construction of a gigantic statue of Siegfried on the Freinberg, a hill west of the city centre, where he also planned to build his retirement home.

Little was actually realized. Apart from the Nibelungenbrücke and the stiff, oversized buildings facing it on the south side of the river, the most significant progress was made in buying, borrowing and appropriating more than 5000 artworks for the new art gallery. Initially, these were stored in Munich, but towards the end of the war the cache was shipped to the salt mines of Altaussee in the Salzkammergut, where in the final days of the war a group of partisans prevented local Nazis from carrying out orders to destroy them.

showpiece to compete with the Lentos Kunstmuseum; a "museum of the future", after all, must move with the times. A truly remarkable place, Ars Electronica is dedicated to the creative possibilities of new technology, with its biggest attraction being the "CAVE" (Cave Automatic Virtual Environment), a virtual-reality room with 3-D projections on the walls and floor. Wearing a 3-D viewfinder, you navigate your way through a series of virtual spaces, the effect of which can be quite disconcerting. The museum's other attractions include an animation studio, a virtual-reality flight over Linz and a virtual recreation of the interiors of Vienna's Schloss Schönbrunn. Not the least of Ars Electronica's charms is that there is plenty of opportunity for hands-on involvement. A short distance to the south, the OK offers Kutturhaus (Tues–Thurs 4–10pm, Fri 4pm–midnight, Sat 10am–midnight, Sun 10am–10pm, €5) is a reworked school

building, on Dametzstrasse fronting a slick new plaza, showcasing experimental contemporary pieces by young artists.

The awesome presence of the neo-Gothic **Neuer Dom** (Mon–Sat 7.30am–7pm, Sun 8am–7pm) is impossible to ignore as you walk around the city. Situated a couple of blocks west of Landstrasse, and topped by a steeple that soars to 134m – just short of Vienna's Stephansdom, as stipulated by the authorities – this massive building is Austria's largest cathedral. It was begun in 1855 under Bishop Franz-Josef Rudigier, a tireless patron of Anton Bruckner, whom he commissioned to write a choral piece to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone. For all its size, the Neuer Dom is a dry, academic exercise from the outside; inside, it's more appealing, particularly in the ambulatory, where the sun scatters multicoloured light through modern stained-glass windows.

A couple of blocks east of Landstrasse down Bethlehemstrasse is **Nordico** (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 2–5pm; €4.50; Ⓦwww.nordico.at). Formerly the city museum, it now houses a variety of temporary exhibitions from archeology to regional art. The building was used until 1786 by the Jesuits to train young students from Scandinavia, hence the "Nordico" moniker. The nearby **Landesgalerie** (Tues–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; €4; Ⓦwww.landesmuseum.at) occupies a splendid mustard-coloured building, opened in 1895 with a Neoclassical frieze and cherub-guarded obelisks on its roof. The interior is equally ornate, filled with changing exhibitions of twentieth and twenty-first century art, including works by artists with a connection to Upper Austria.

Lentos Kunstmuseum

Beyond the northern end of Hauptplatz at the base of the Nibelungenbrücke lies the uncompromisingly modern **Lentos Kunstmuseum** (daily 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm; €6; Ⓣ0732/7070-3614, Ⓦwww.lentos.at). Linz's most important recent architectural landmark, it at last gives the city a gallery worthy of its top-drawer art collection; despite this the museum has struggled to maintain visitor numbers. The work of award-winning Swiss architects Weber and Hofer, the building has been nicknamed the Swiss Box for its stark concrete-and-glass looks, though it's more engaging after dark, when fluorescent lights beneath the glass slowly change colour from cool blue to moody pink.

Inside, the Kunstmuseum hosts temporary exhibitions by contemporary artists and boasts a high-quality permanent collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Austrian art. Pride of place goes to **Oskar Kokoschka**'s agitated rendition of Linz, painted in 1955 and emphasizing the city's industrial character, while his portrait of Austrian president Theodor Körner, from the same year, employs an exuberant Fauvist palette. **Egon Schiele** pitches in with two oil paintings: a joyful *Krumau Landscape*, inspired by his brief sojourn in his mother's Bohemian birthplace; and a striking, almost monochrome double portrait, *Heinrich and Otto Benesch*. Completing the country's most famous trio of artists, there are a couple of unfinished works by **Gustav Klimt**, one of which, the *Portrait of Maria Munk*, is a typically Japanese-influenced late work, in which the gold ornament for which he made his name has been entirely replaced by bright colours and a profusion of plants.

Pöstlingberg

If the weather is fine (or you have children to entertain), it's fun to ride the narrow-gauge **Pöstlingbergbahn** (closed till 2009; replacement bus service from Hauptplatz), which departs from the timber and red-brick Talstation, just beyond Linz-Urfahr train station. Trains wind their way up the world's steepest

"adhesion" railway past swanky villas to the top of the **Pöstlingberg** (539m), nearly 300m above the Danube.

The views over Linz are spectacular, as is the Baroque **Wallfahrtskirche** on the crest of the hill. The interior is decorated with outstanding frescoes and rich Rococo stucco-work bristling with gold, but the object of greatest veneration is the eighteenth-century carved *Pietà*, which occupies centre stage in the stupendously ornate high altar.

If you have small children, you might feel obliged to visit the miniature **Märchenfeld** (Fairy World) and its attendant **Grottenbahn** (daily: March–June, Sept & Oct 10am–5pm; daily: July & Aug 10am–6pm; Dec Sun 10am–5pm; €4.40), a subterranean railway pulled by a dragon. Everyone else should give it a wide berth, unless they've a penchant for Technicolor garden gnomes.

Eating

Linz's **restaurants** are concentrated in the Altstadt and around Landstrasse; the range of cuisines is broader than in most Austrian towns. The city is famous for *Linzertorte*, a jam tart made with almond pastry and available from just about every café or as a souvenir from the esteemed Philipp Wrann, Landstr 70. As ever in Austria the distinction between bars, cafés and restaurants is blurred, so check the drinking section too if you want a light snack or pub food. The Bosner Eck *wurstlstand* next to the casino on Landstrasse stays open late at weekends to cater for post-club culinary cravings.

Café Traxlmayr Promenade 16. A Linz institution, the city's pre-eminent Kaffeehaus is the place to linger over kaffee, kuchen and the day's newspapers. There's a large garden terrace in summer.

Klosterhof Landstr 30. Standard Austrian fare in the labyrinthine rooms of a former monastery: the *Bierstuben* is a smoky beer hall; the designer *Stieglitz* bar is flashier, with live music on Fri and Sat; outside is Linz's largest beer garden.

Gelbes Krokodil Dametzstr 30. Arty café in the Moviemento arts cinema, with affordable veggie, Mediterranean & Asian-influenced food. Closed Sat & Sun lunchtime.

Herberstein Altstadt 10 ☎0732/786161. Buzzy restaurant and bar in a former Renaissance-era monks' dormitory. The food is international with an Asian twist, the atmosphere more club than restaurant at weekends.

Levante Hauptplatz 13. Smart, vaulted Turkish restaurant with a tasty selection of inexpensive *pide* – Turkish-style pizzas – and kebabs.

Los Caballeros Landstr 32, ☎0732/778970. In a courtyard just off the main street, this place serves vast portions of passable Tex-Mex food until midnight.

Niu Klammstr 1. Fiercely authentic Thai curries and Japanese noodle dishes cooked up by a former chef at London's Wagamama. Tues–Fri only.

Pius Hauptplatz 2. Large, central organic food store and restaurant offering good value hot dishes (around €6). Open Mon–Fri, lunchtimes only.

Verdi Pachmayrstr 137, Urfahr, ☎0732/733005. Linz's most acclaimed temple of haute cuisine is in the northern suburbs, with an adjacent sister restaurant serving simpler fare.

Drinking and nightlife

The raucous "Bermuda Triangle", west of Hauptplatz, is the place to go in the evening if you're under 25; the triangle is formed by the streets Hofgasse, Hahnengasse and Altstadt. Otherwise, you may prefer to seek out some of the calmer, classier places elsewhere in the centre. There's a smaller concentration of late-opening bars in Urfahr. Linz's bigger **discos** are in the distant suburbs, though at weekends many inner city bars and cafés have makeshift dance floors.

Alte Welt Hauptplatz 4. Sweaty, late-night, cellar wine bar that puts on live jazz, folk and world music. Two upstairs rooms and a pretty courtyard offer food. Closed Sun.

Biergartl Obere Donaustr 4, Urfahr. Beside the Danube west of the bridge, this is perhaps the nicest beer garden north of the river and is also good for hearty regional food.

Café Landgraf Hauptstr 12. A cross between a stylish Kaffeehaus and a modern chrome-and-glass cocktail bar, this is one of the few fashionable drinking haunts in Urfahr.

Divino Domgasse 20. Classy little vinothek that's more grown-up than the Bermuda Triangle's offerings, serving authentic tapas to accompany its Spanish wines.

Insas Rathausgasse 5. Linz's liveliest, most central gay and lesbian bar attracts a youngish crowd, with regular events including karaoke, plus a disco in the cellar.

Josef Landstr 49. Gargantuan beerkeller serving ales brewed by the local city brewery, open until 4am and with pizza or schnitzel-type fare to soak up the alcohol.

Kitty Kiernan's Hessenplatz 19. Big Irish theme pub with Premier League soccer on TV, Irish beers and reasonably priced, multicultural food from fish and chips to schnitzel.

Marcelli Landstr 17–25. Cavernous, modern café bar in the Passage shopping centre; by night it converts into central Linz's largest mainstream dance club.

Posthof Posthofgasse 43 ⓣ0732/7705480, ⓦwww.posthof.at. Alternative arts centre over by the docks (take bus #46) that puts on Linz's best programme of gigs and other events, ranging from modern dance to discos.

'S Kistl Altstadt 17. A laid-back first pitstop in the Bermuda Triangle, with 25 beers including six on tap, plus tasty munchies.

Smaragd Altstadt 2. Bermuda Triangle cocktail bar with a dance floor where you may indeed disappear until 4am – live music Weds, Latin dance Thurs and DJs at weekends.

Strom Kirchengasse, Urfahr. Relaxed, friendly hangout for a wide range of alternative music fans and other nonconformists, with occasional live gigs.

Entertainment

Linz is big enough to accommodate a wide variety of tastes, but **highbrow culture** predominates. Full-scale opera is performed at the Grosses Haus at the Landestheater, on the Promenade (ⓣ0732/7611400, ⓦwww.landestheater-linz.at), with straight drama on the theatre's two smaller stages. Children's theatre and puppet shows are staged at Kuddelmuddel, Langgasse 13 (ⓣ0732/600444, ⓦwww.kuddelmuddel.at). There are regular concerts at the Ursulinenhof on Landstrasse, but the modern Brucknerhaus, Untere Donaulände 7 (ⓣ0732/775230, ⓦwww.brucknerhaus.at), by the river, is the main concert hall, and the focus of the annual **Brucknerfest**, which takes place in the second half of September. The festival begins with the *Klangwolken-Weekend* (ⓦwww.klangwolke.at), with live transmissions of a Bruckner symphony, a laser show and open-air party by the Danube. The city's most offbeat festival is the **Ars Electronica Festival**, which takes place in early September, and features avant-garde music, installations and a competition for the most innovative piece of art using virtual reality.

Films in their original languages are shown at Moviemento, the city's main **arts cinema**, at Dametzstr 30. For a rundown of the month's events, pick up the *Programm* **listings** leaflet from the tourist office.

Listings

Car hire Avis, Blue Danube Airport, Hörsching ⓣ07221/600 6300; Hertz, Bürgerstr 19 ⓣ0732/784841, Sixt, Hauptbahnhof ⓣ0732/661170.

Hospital Krankenhausstr 9 ⓣ0732/7806-0

Internet access Linz is developing a free, city-wide network of wireless hot spots (ⓦwww.hotspotlinz.at); most libraries already have web access, or go to Speednet in the Hauptbahnhof, open until 10.30pm daily.

Pharmacy Central pharmacies are open Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 8am–noon; Centralapotheke, Mozartstr 1 (ⓣ0732/771783), is one of the most convenient.

Post office The main post office is at Bahnhofplatz 11 Mon–Fri 7am–9pm; Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 9am–1pm.

Around Linz

Linz lies within easy reach of two of Upper Austria's finest monasteries, **St Florian**, where Anton Bruckner is buried, and the lesser-known **Wilhering**, both primarily of interest for their outstanding Baroque and Rococo architecture. Austria's most infamous concentration camp, **Mauthausen**, downriver from Linz, is a chilling reminder of the country's wartime experience, and could be combined with a more light-hearted trip to the small town of **Enns**.

Stift St Florian

The Augustinian **Stift St Florian** (Ⓦ www.stift-st-florian.at), 12km southeast of Linz, is Upper Austria's most illustrious abbey. Florian was the chief Roman official at the nearby town of Lauriacum (Enns), but when he converted to Christianity he was imprisoned, tortured and eventually martyred in 304 AD by being thrown into the River Enns with a millstone around his neck. The story goes that he was washed up and buried at the spot where the abbey was later built.

Renowned for its Baroque architecture, the abbey is also known for its associations with Anton Bruckner (see box). The composer joined the abbey choir at the age of 11, eventually went on to become organist here, and is buried, according to his wishes, beneath the ornate, and extraordinarily loud, 7000-pipe organ in the **Stiftskirche**, at the northern end of the vast complex. Begun in 1686 by Carlo Carlone, the church boasts a gleaming-white interior flanked by imposing Corinthian half-columns, crowned with a heavy, stuccoed cornice. Decorated with a continuous band of trompe l'oeil frescoes, the nave's vaulting creates a somewhat lighter atmosphere. From mid-May to mid-October you can hear the organ being put through its paces for twenty minutes, at 2.30pm every day except Tuesday and Sunday (€3).

To visit the rest of the abbey, join one of the hourly **guided tours** (April–Oct daily 10 & 11am, 2, 3 & 4pm; €6), that begin with the **Bibliothek**, lined with undulating bookshelves and balconies and sporting a ceiling fresco by Bartolomeo Altomonte. Next, you see Jakob Prandtauer's **Marmorsaal**, a marble extravanganza in patriotic red-and-white Babenberg colours, with a Martino Bartolomeo fresco celebrating victory over the Turks, who sit above the cornice dejected, chained and exhausted. A stroll up Prandtauer's monumental staircase – which takes up almost the entire west facade of the main courtyard – brings you to a 200-metre-long corridor, off which are the **imperial apartments**. With their red damask walls and stuccoed ceilings, these VIP guest rooms have changed little since falling into disuse in 1782. Prince Eugène of Savoy's four-poster bed (in which the diminutive general never actually slept) is the star attraction, an over-the-top Rococo imitation of a Turkish tent with Technicolor Turks tied to its corner posts. At the end of the corridor, the **Bruckner Gedenkraum** features another significant bed – a bouncy, English-sprung brass bedstead bought for the composer by his students, and in which he died.

Lastly, the abbey owns the world's largest collection of works by **Albrecht Altdorfer** (1480–1538) of Regensburg, namely fourteen panels from the *Altar of St Sebastian*, painted in 1518 for the old Gothic church of St Florian. Along with Dürer and Lucas Cranach the Elder, Altdorfer was one of a group of painters known as the "Danube School". Danubian scenery features prominently in the school's works, particularly those of Altdorfer, whose scenes from the Passion are played against luxuriant Upper Austrian landscapes; in the

Anton Bruckner

Anton Bruckner (1824–95) was a composer of towering stature, his nine symphonies held with those of Brahms and Mahler to be the greatest since Beethoven; but as a man he was a figure of fun, derided in Vienna for his provincial appearance, regional accent and disingenuousness. He was famous for his lack of success in love, his fruitless pursuit of young women a constant theme of his life-long bachelorhood.

Born in Ansfelden, 10km south of Linz, where his father was a teacher and organist, Bruckner followed in his father's footsteps until 1855, when he became cathedral organist in Linz. It was there, in 1862, while studying under Otto Kitzler, a teacher ten years his junior, that Bruckner heard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* for the first time, a revelatory moment that sparked his first compositional masterpieces. In 1868, he became a teacher at the Vienna conservatory, and later a lecturer at the university. It was in Vienna that he wrote the bulk of his work and where he died, though he chose to be buried at St Florian, where he had been a choirboy and, later, teacher.

Bruckner was an obsessive man who took his work very seriously, practising ten hours at the piano, three hours at the organ, then studying into the night. He constantly revised his work, especially towards the end of his life, and suffered bouts of numeromania (an obsession with counting), keeping a tally of the number of prayers he had said each day, insisting on numbering all the bars in his scores, and, when his condition worsened, counting the leaves on trees and the stars in the night sky. His other major obsession was death. He was present at the exhumations of Beethoven and Schubert, and apparently viewed the charred remains of victims of Vienna's Ringtheater fire of 1881; the macabre necropolis below the organ of St Florian's Stiftskirche is thus an appropriate setting for his tomb.

Crown of Thorns scene, the old St Florian church can be seen in the background. The tour ends in the Stiftskirche where you get to see Bruckner's tomb in the crypt, set against a mountain of over 6000 bones.

In honour of the abbey's namesake, Florian – patron saint of firefighters – there is a **Feuerwehrmuseum** (May–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 2–4pm; €2.50) in one of the monastic outbuildings, housing a collection of ancient and modern fire engines. An easy two-kilometre walk from the centre of St Florian, the engaging **Jagdmuseum** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 1–5pm; €2) is dedicated to hunting, shooting and fishing. It's housed in **Schloss Hohenbrunn**, another work by Prandtauer.

Infrequent **buses** from Linz arrive at Gendarmerieplatz below St Florian's Marktplatz, from where you follow the road to the left uphill to the abbey gate. If you need to **eat**, the abbey's *Stiftsrestaurant* offers soups, schnitzel (around €7.20), and pricier fish dishes.

Wilhering

The Cistercian monastery at **WILHERING**, 8km upriver from Linz, may not have St Florian's Bruckner connection – and therefore receives a fraction of the visitors – but it's almost equally alluring. Although founded in the twelfth century, the current abbey was mostly designed by local craftsman Johann Haslinger, after an arson attack by a 12-year-old girl in 1733 destroyed the old monastery. The chief attraction is the remarkable Rococo **Stiftskirche** (daily dawn to dusk; free), which dominates the grassy main courtyard. Austrian baroque may be flamboyant, but it only rarely spills over into full-blown Rococo excess – Wilhering is one such occasion. The wealth of decoration in the stunning interior, designed by Martino Altomonte and his nephew

Bartolomeo, takes a while simply to absorb. The visual drama is at its most intoxicating in the ceiling, where the rich colouring of Bartolomeo Altomonte's frescoes is matched in its exceptional detail by the surrounding stucco-work, presided over by acrobatic angels and cherubs in colour-coordinated robes. The organ is also a Rococo tour-de-force, with its gilded filigree, music-making putti and a clock suspended between the organ pipes that chimes in unison with the church clock every quarter of an hour. You're also free to walk round the **cloisters**, which shelter eighteen more paintings by Altomonte on the life of St Bernhard, one of the founders of the Cistercian order. **Buses** from Linz stop on the main road outside.

Mauthausen

By 1945, Hitler's home district of Upper Austria was endowed with more concentration camps than any other region in the Reich. The most notorious was **KZ Mauthausen** (daily 9am–5.30pm, last entry 4.45pm; €2), some 20km downriver from Linz, established in August 1938 with prisoners transferred from Dachau. Theoretically, Mauthausen was a slave labour camp, not an extermination camp, its inmates forced to work in the adjacent granite quarry. However, the death toll was such that economic considerations were clearly secondary: of the 200,000 inmates who passed through, around half perished. The life expectancy of Jewish inmates was shortest of all, but an equal number of those who died were Soviet POWs and Poles.

Before you enter the camp, stop by the slick museum (free) between it and the car park. Big-screen films (shown on the hour – English available on request) place the camp in context and describe its most spectacular events – including the escape of hundreds of high-security Russian prisoners, most of whom were mercilessly hunted down in the local countryside. But mostly camp life was just a combination of unremitting drudgery and all-consuming terror; the museum explores these through its displays of inmates' humble possessions, and though the video testimonies of survivors. Watch at least a couple of these to understand what camp life really meant before you see the complex for yourself.

The most surprising thing about Mauthausen is its solidity: this is no ad hoc camp, but an imposing fortress high above the Danube, visible for miles around. Only a few of the 25 flimsy wooden barracks within have survived, and most were badly damaged during a storm in January 2007; repair work means that much of the area inside the fortress is likely to be fenced off for some time to come. Poignant personal memorials are scattered throughout the camp, erected by relatives and friends of victims from countries as far apart as Spain and the Soviet Union. Underneath the Sick Quarters is the camp's chillingly well-preserved gas chamber, disguised, as at Auschwitz, as showers.

The quarry lies just northwest of the main gate, beyond the official national memorials. Thousands were worked to death on the infamous **Todestiege** (Stairway of Death), the 189 steps that lead out of the granite quarry. En route, you pass what the SS jokingly referred to as the "Parachutists' Jump", a sheer cliff overlooking the quarry, where prisoners were pushed to their deaths. Perhaps the best-known survivor of Mauthausen was **Simon Wiesenthal** (1908–2005), who spent the rest of his life trying to bring those responsible for Nazi war crimes to justice.

Buses from Linz drop you at the Linzer Strasse-Wasserwerke stop on the western edge of Mauthausen village, from where it's a signposted 2km hike

uphill to the camp. By train from Linz, you change at St Valentin; from Mauthausen station it's a 5km hike, although taxis are available, or you could shorten the walk by taking the Linz bus from the station to the Linzer Strasse-Wasserwerke stop.

Enns

The winsome little walled town of **ENNS**, 6km southwest of Mauthausen, is an easy day-trip from Linz by train. Situated close to the confluence of the Enns and the Danube, it has been a strategically important site for more than two millennia. Under the Romans, the town was known as Lauriacum, and served as the civil capital of Noricum and military base of the Second Legion, who guarded this section of the imperial frontier. From 1945–55, Enns was the key entry/exit point between the Soviet and American occupation zones; today, it lies along the border between Lower and Upper Austria.

The town's **Hauptplatz** is very attractive, lined with pastel-coloured Baroque facades that often conceal older, arcaded courtyards. Numerous examples can be seen from the top of the colossal sixteenth-century **Stadtturm** (May–Oct 8am–8pm; Nov–April 9am–6pm; €1), a lookout tower and belfry which soars 60m from the centre of the square. To examine one of these courtyards more closely, check out the **Alte Burg**, on Wienerstrasse, or no. 4a Bräunerstr, which runs parallel with Linzerstrasse.

Back on Hauptplatz, the pink, sixteenth-century Altes Rathaus now serves as the **Museum Lauriacum** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 2–4pm; Nov–March Sun 10am–noon & 2–4pm; €5; Ⓦ www.museum-lauriacum.at), housing an exhaustive display of pottery, ironware and funerary sculpture unearthed from the Roman settlement. Undoubted showpiece is the second-century ceiling fresco that has been reassembled in one of the upstairs rooms, depicting a ruddy-skinned Cupid whispering sweet nothings to a young woman. An adjacent alcove displays silver tableware from the same period, notably a beaker decorated with animated hunting scenes. Further archeological remains can be viewed at the Gothic **St Laurenz-Basilika**, 1km northwest of the Altstadt off the road to Linz, on the site of the Roman town. Here, the altar has been moved forward, and the chancel floor ripped away to reveal the foundations of a Romano-Celtic temple (180 AD), an early Christian church (370 AD), perhaps founded by St Severin, and a later Carolingian church (740 AD). Roman fresco fragments and the remains of a hypocaust heating system can be seen in the crypt (guided tours in German only; April–Oct daily at 4pm; €4).

Practicalities

Enns' **train station** is 1500m northwest of the Hauptplatz, beyond the St Laurenz-Basilika; buses from Linz and Steyr drop you on the main square. If you want to stay, you can get private **rooms** (❷) in the Altstadt through the **tourist office**, at the base of the Stadtturm (May, June & Sept Mon–Fri 9am–6pm; July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat 9am–1pm; Oct–April Mon–Fri 9am–3pm; Ⓣ 07223/82777, Ⓦ www.oberoesterreich.at/enns). The *Hotel Lauriacum*, Wienerstr 5–7 (Ⓣ 07223/82315, Ⓦ www.lauriacum.at; ❻), is the top place to stay, offering tastefully decorated en suites. However, *Gasthof zum Goldenen Schiff* (Ⓣ 07223/86086, Ⓦ www.hotel-brunner.at; ❹), at Hauptplatz 23, offers similar comforts for less money. For no-nonsense Austrian **food**, try the specials (around €7.50) at the *Gasthaus zur Stadt Linz*, Hauptplatz 4.

Mühlviertel

The **Mühlviertel**, north of Linz towards the Czech border, is a lost corner of Austria, where few tourists venture. The wonderful sweep and roll of the wooded countryside is more Bohemia than Austria, and holds two places of compelling interest: **Kefermarkt**, with its remarkable carved altarpiece, and the walled town of **Freistadt**, both reached by the main road and rail line heading into the Czech Republic.

Kefermarkt

The sole reason for visiting **KEFERMARKT**, 30km or so northeast of Linz, is to see the fifteenth-century **Wallfahrtskirche**, clearly visible, and a ten-minute walk uphill, from the train station. The church has some attractive lierne vaulting, but it's the enormous winged **altarpiece**, carved out of limewood by an unknown artist around 1490, that is the chief draw. The depth of expression in the faces of the three life-size saints at centre stage is startling, as is the thicket of finials and tracery that reaches 13m above the main section. Note, also, the two beautifully carved saints in full armour flanking the altarpiece: Florian, casually dousing a tiny fire, and George, nonchalantly dealing with a minuscule dragon.

If you're peckish, it's a further ten-minute walk to **Schloss Weinberg**, a lovely double-moated castle with a Baroque keep, which is now an art and music school; you can eat heartily for €7.50 at the *Schlossbrauerei* by the gates and sample the Weinberger beer brewed on the premises.

Freistadt

Surrounded by one of the best-preserved sets of town fortifications in the country, **FREISTADT**, 17km short of the Czech frontier, is an archetypal medieval border town. The town's moat may be grassed over, but it's clearly visible and still overlooked by several of the original bastions, as well as two imposing gateways, the finest of which is the wedge-shaped Linzer Tor. The defences were built during the fourteenth century, as Freistadt grew rich on the salt trade that passed through and on the privileges heaped upon it by successive Babenberg and Habsburg rulers in order to keep it as a loyal bulwark in the Bohemian borderlands. With both sides of the border in Habsburg hands after 1526, Freistadt's significance waned, and not much has changed since – the town even has a night watchman.

On the central **Hauptplatz**, the pale-coloured facades are mostly Baroque, but they hide much older buildings. In one corner of the square, the town's fourteenth-century **Schloss** is clearly visible, in its coat of flaking ochre. The **Schlossmuseum** (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 2–5pm; €2.40) is unremarkable except for the view from its tower and for its collection of *Hinterglasbilder*, pictures painted on the backs of panes of glass, in a technique perfected in the nineteenth century by artists from the nearby village of Sandl. The paintings are locked in the castle chapel and you have to ask to gain admission. In the opposite corner of the square stands the **Katharinenmünster**, its ostentatious pink and white Baroque tower totally at odds with the calm Gothic interior, whose vaulting retains patches of medieval mural. More than any specific sight, though, Freistadt is rewarding simply to explore at leisure.

Practicalities

Buses from Linz stop just below the entrance to Freistadt's Altstadt; **trains** arrive some 3km southwest of the centre and are connected to it by bus. Either way, traffic crawling through town to the Czech border makes the final part of the

journey slow and frustrating. Pick up a plan of the Altstadt from the **tourist office** at Hauptplatz 14 (May–Oct Mon–Fri 8.30am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; Nov–March Mon–Fri 8.30am–5pm; ⓣ07942/75700, ⓦwww.muehlviertler-kernland.at). Freistadt is an atmospheric place to spend the night; **hotels** in the Altstadt start with the *Gasthof Deim zum goldenen Hirschen*, Böhmergasse 8–10 (ⓣ07942/722580, ⓦwww.hotels-freistadt.at; 5), a characterful old inn dating to the fifteenth century. *Gasthof zum goldenen Adler*, Salzgasse 1 (ⓣ07942/72112; 5), is run by the same family and makes a decent second choice. Cheaper options include *Pension Pirklbauer*, Höllgasse 2/4 (ⓣ07942/72440; ⓦwww.pension-pirklbauer.at 2). Freistadt's **youth hostel** (ⓣ0650/2341171, ⓦwww.jugendherberge-freistadt.at;) is right by the Schloss, and there's a **campsite** (ⓣ07942/72570; ⓦwww.freistadt.at/ffc) northeast of the Altstadt alongside the River Feldaist.

The *Lubinger* café on Hauptplatz is good for coffee and cake, and *Vis à Vis*, Salzgasse 13 (closed Sun), does a two-course lunch from €6.80. But for the full monty, you can't beat the aforementioned *Gasthof Deim zum goldenen Hirschen* or *Goldener Adler*. Be sure to try some of the town's excellent Freistädter Bier; the brewery, which has been communally owned since 1777, stands close to the Altstadt and can be visited.

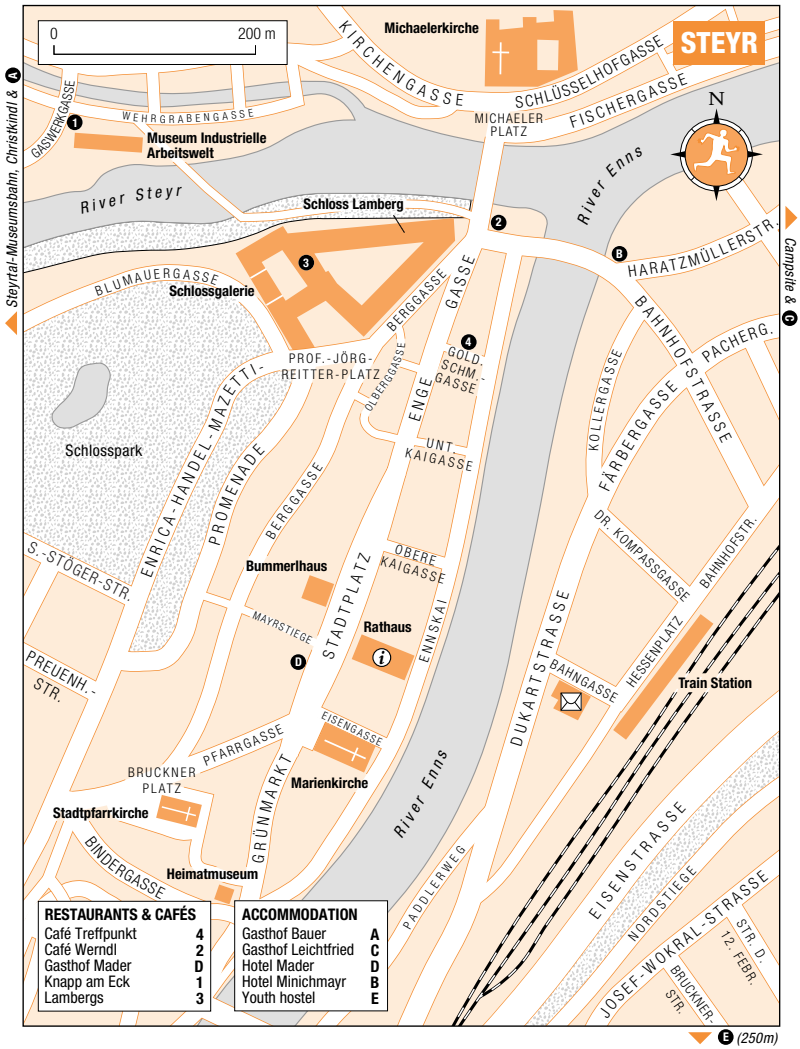
Steyr

Schubert considered **STEYR** "inconceivably lovely", when he stayed here in 1819 and wrote the famous *Trout Quintet*, and although he was hardly the world's most travelled man he wasn't far wrong. Strategically and dramatically situated at the fast-flowing confluence of two alpine rivers, Steyr is characterized by its picturesque zigzag riverfront of red rooftops. It grew rich on the trade in iron ore from the Eisenerzer Alps, and then, in the nineteenth century, became one of the most important arms-manufacturing towns in Austria. Even today, it remains an industrial town, though you'd never know it from the beautifully preserved Altstadt.

The Town

The best way to approach the Altstadt from the station is from the south, through the town's last remaining gateway, Neutor, and past the *sgraffitoed* Innerberger Stadel, a seventeenth-century granary that now houses the **Heimatmuseum** (Jan–March & Nov Wed–Sun 10am–4pm; April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–4pm; Dec daily 10am–5pm; free), the usual local history collection, enlivened by a nativity scene in the form of a mechanical rod puppet theatre, with more than four hundred moving figures, though the latter only works during Advent and New Year. Steps by the side of the Innerberger Stadel lead up to the **Stadtpfarrkirche**, built in the late fifteenth century by the architect of Vienna's Stephansdom, but rather crudely re-Gothicized in the 1880s. A more rewarding church interior, decked out with Rococo adornments, can be found in the **Marienkirche**, set back from Grünmarkt.

Steyr's elongated main square, **Stadtplatz**, creates a grand impression, with handsome town houses facing each other across the cobbles. The most famous is the **Bummerlhaus**, built in 1497 as an inn and sporting a distinctive triangular gable and first-floor overhang, decorated with intricate tracery and blind arcading. It is now a bank. The **Rathaus**, across the square, is a suitably imposing edifice, designed by the mayor with a Rococo facade and flamboyant belfry topped with a pile of copper onion domes. There are more superb Rococo facades at the north



end of Stadtplatz, in particular the **Sternhaus**, from 1768, with its garish sky-blue and yellow colour scheme, fancy stucco-work and posing cherubs. Stadtplatz eventually funnels into the narrow defile of Engegasse, a busy shopping street lined with yet more brightly painted, overhanging houses.

As you cross the bridge over the River Steyr to the equally ancient suburb of Steyrdorf, the spectacular facade of the **Michaelerkirche** rises up ahead of you. Built by the Jesuits in 1635, its twin towers flank a dramatic and colourful gable fresco featuring the Archangel Michael. During Advent the Michaelerplatz in front of the church is home to the **Christmas Museum** (24 Nov–6 Jan daily 10am–5pm; €3), whose exhibits include antique Christmas decorations, dolls and dolls' houses. The picturesque cobbled streets to the west are wonderfully peaceful (and

conceal the town's discreet red light district). You can cross a narrow arm of the Steyr here to visit the excellent **Museum Arbeitswelt** (Tues–Sun 9am–5pm; €5) on Wehrgrabengasse, which charts the town's industrialization and its social impact, with generous dollops of working-class history and unflinching coverage of the forced labour used by Steyr's factories during World War II. The town's armaments industries are the focus of the section on nineteenth-century entrepreneur Josef Werndl, whose factory supplied rifles to an imperial army which, defeated by the Prussians at Königgratz in 1866, was desperate for up-to-date equipment. Werndl was a benevolent capitalist who built houses (and a swimming pool) for his workers, but he forbade unions, and the next section is devoted to the town's interwar transformation into the so-called Rote Insel ("Red Island"), in which the Austrian Socialist Party oversaw most aspects of political and cultural life.

A nearby footbridge crosses the river to the base of **Schloss Lamberg**, whose stumpy towers – one castellated, one Baroque – barely rise above its walls. The schloss now houses the town council and police, but you can wander through the tranquil, triangular courtyard, surrounded by Baroque statues of dwarfs. On the northwest side of the Schloss, the **Schlossgalerie** (Thurs–Sun 10am–noon & 2–5pm; free), hosts visiting exhibitions of contemporary art. To the southwest the stately Promenade leads to an overblown **statue** of Josef Werndl brandishing one of his own rifles. His ostentatious home, Schloss Voglsang, can be glimpsed nearby at the end of Preuenhuberstrasse.

In summer and during Advent, steam trains run at the weekend along the narrow-gauge **Steyrtal-Museumsbahn** (May–Sept Sat 2pm & 6.30pm, Sun 10am, 2pm & 6.30pm; Dec Sat & Sun 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm & 6pm; €10 return) to Grünberg, 17km to the southwest. The Lokalbahnhof from which they depart is ten minutes' walk west of Schloss Lamberg, down Blumauergasse. If you continue for another 1.5km upriver you come to the Baroque church of **Christkindl**, high above the river. It was built in the seventeenth century to house a wax figure of Jesus (still the centrepiece of the church's altar), which had been attracting a steady stream of pilgrims because of its supposed healing powers. It's still a major draw, though for rather different reasons. At Christmas, two million Christmas cards are sent from the church's post office to philatelists across the globe. Thousands more are sent to the church – each getting a reply – from Austrian kids asking for a present from *Christkind* (Baby Jesus), the traditional giver of Christmas presents in Austria.

Practicalities

The **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8.30am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ07252/532290, ⓦwww.tourism-steyr.at) is in the Rathaus, and can help organize **private rooms** (2). Steyr's finest **hotel** is the *Hotel Mader* (ⓣ07252/53358, ⓦwww.mader.at; 7), a splendid Renaissance building on Stadtplatz, with an arcaded inner courtyard and modern en-suite rooms. For spectacular views of the confluence of the Enns and Steyr, head for *Hotel Minichmayr*, Haratzmüllerstr 1–3 (ⓣ07252/53410, ⓦwww.hotel-minichmayr.at; 6), which has plush en suites, or the more modest *Frühstückspension Leichtfried*, at no. 25 (ⓣ07252/52438, ⓦwww.steyr-austria.com; 3). Another inexpensive option, the cosy *Gasthof Bauer*, Josefgasse 7 (bus #2b from the train station to Schwimmschulstrasse; ⓣ07252/54441, ⓦwww.bauer-gasthof.at; 4), is around 500m from Schlosspark on an island in the river.

Steyr's **youth hostel** is at Josef Hafnerstr 14 (reception Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 3–10pm, Sat & Sun 3–10pm; ⓣ07252/45580), a fifteen-minute walk from the station; turn right out of the station, then right down Damberggasse, under

the railway tracks, right again at Arbeiterstrasse, and fourth right down Otto-Glockel-Strasse. The nearest **campsite** is *Campingplatz Forelle* (☎07252/78008, ⓦwww.forellesteyr.com; April–Oct), by the River Enns in the suburb of Münichholz, 2.5km north (bus #1 from the train station).

For **meals**, *Gasthof Mader* (closed Sun) does a good value three-course Brunch-menü for €9; *Lambergs* in Schloss Lamberg is recommended for more international food. *Knapp am Eck*, next to Arbeitswelt on the corner of Wehrgrabengasse and Gaswerkgasse, is an intimate, cosy restaurant and a decent place for a drink. For coffee and cake, *Café Werndl*, beside the bridge over the Steyr, enjoys fabulous views, while *Treff Café* down on the Ennskai, is good for late **drinking**.

Kremsmünster

The vast Benedictine monastery of **Kremsmünster** is one of the most uusual and rewarding of Austria's abbeys. Built on raised ground above the River Krems, its roofline is punctuated not just by the twin spires of its church, but by the strange silo-like observatory or Sternwarte. Kremsmünster also boasts a unique set of seventeenth-century fish ponds, plus the usual feast of Baroque interiors.

Trains from Linz arrive at Kremsmünster's bahnhof, across the river in Kremsegg: follow Bahnhofstrasse to Marktplatz, where **buses** from Wels arrive and from which the abbey entrance is signposted – the abbey itself is not hard to spot as it utterly dominates the town. If you need to **eat**, *Stiftsschank* opposite the abbey shop serves inexpensive schnitzel, plus fish from the Fischkalter.

The Fischkalter and Stiftskirche

The abbey's most remarkable architectural set piece, its **Fischkalter** (Fish Basins), is accessible via the ticket office/shop (daily 9am–noon & 1–5.30pm; €2), in the first courtyard. Designed in 1690 by Carlo Carlone, and expanded by Jakob Prandtauer some thirty years later, the Fischkalter consist of five symmetrical ponds fringed by graceful Italianate arcades originally decorated with frescoes, only patches of which now survive. Each basin has a mythological or biblical fountain at the centre, and the cumulative noise of the water echoing round the arcades is quite deafening. If you want to watch the carp go crazy, you can buy fish food from the abbey shop.

The **Stiftskirche**, across the moat in the second courtyard, is also the work of Carlo Carlone, who redesigned much of the abbey in Baroque style from the 1670s onwards. The interior is coated with a staggering quantity of thick, white stucco, which totally upstages the ceiling frescoes. The other unusual decoration in the church is the set of eight seventeenth-century Flemish tapestries wrapped round the pillars of the nave, depicting the story of Joseph in Egypt. The side altars are refreshingly cherub-free, their oil paintings flanked only by pairs of finely carved angels. The sole reminder of the original Gothic Stiftskirche is the exquisitely serene, thirteenth-century tomb of Gunther, which lies in the chapel beneath the south tower. Gunther's death in the woods hereabouts, at the trotters of a wild boar, prompted his father, Duke Tassilo III of Bavaria, to found a monastery here in 777. The figure of Gunther lies on his sepulchre beside the aforementioned boar, with a hunting horn in his hand and his dog by his feet.

The Kunstsammlung and Sternwarte

To see the monastery's interior, you must join an hour-long guided tour (in German; group tours in English bookable) of the **Kunstsammlung** (daily:

▲ Kremsmünster

Easter–Oct 10 & 11am, 2, 3 & 4pm; Nov–Easter Tues–Sun 11am, 2pm & 3.30pm; €6.50). After a quick visit to the Fischkalter, you get to see the **Kaisersaal**, designed by Carlone in the 1690s as a summer dining room, and so called because of Martino Altomonte's series of imperial portraits framed by ornate stucco-work. The whitewashed walls contrast sharply with the colourful, energetic trompe l'oeil ceiling fresco, depicting the triumph of light over darkness (for which read Habsburgs over Turks). The most precious medieval objet d'art in the tapestry-lined **treasury** is the eighth-century Carolingian **Tassilo-Kelch**, a remarkable gilded copper chalice decorated with portraits of Christ and his disciples, surrounded by what looks very like Celtic interlacing. The decor in the enormously long **Bibliothek**, again by Carlone, is reminiscent of the Stiftskirche, with heavy stucco-work framing richly coloured frescoes. A bewilderingly large art collection is crammed into several more rooms, with works ranging from unknown fifteenth-century Bohemian artists to the likes of Bartolomeo Altomonte and Kremser Schmidt. Finally, there's a small **Kunstkammer**, whose most renowned artefact is the chair made from the bones of the first elephant brought to Austria (in 1552 by crown prince Maximilian II).

Without doubt the abbey's most unusual feature is the **Sternwarte** (May–Oct daily 10am & 2pm; €7.50), a 50m high, eight-storey tower, completed in 1759. It was built to house a museum that would take visitors from the inanimate world of minerals and fossils at its base through the animal and plant kingdom, to the human arts and sciences and beyond to the observatory, finishing up with contemplation of God in the rooftop chapel. The Sternwarte's collections are still arranged pretty much in the same order. Unfortunately, to visit the tower you have to endure an hour-and-a-half guided tour in German. Persevere, and you'll be rewarded with a fabulous view from the top.

The Kalkalpen National Park

South of Kremsmünster, the land rises towards the Styrian border to create dramatic mountainous landscapes quite atypical of Upper Austria. The highest peaks rise to 2500m along the border itself, but it's the lower **Sengsengebirge** range that forms the nucleus of one of Austria's lesser known national parks, the **Kalkalpen National Park** (Ⓦwww.kalkalpen.at). Established in 1997, the park's 20,000-plus hectares comprise the largest protected area of forest in Austria, rich in wildlife from brown bears to deer, snakes and birds of prey, and with more than 1000 species of flowering plants, mosses or ferns. The park offers plentiful opportunities for mountain biking and horse riding – there's a 23.5km trekking route from Molln to Windischgarsten for experienced riders – and is a rewarding (and still relatively uncrowded) place to walk, particularly in the autumn. National Park centres at Molln, Reichraming and Windischgarsten each focus on a different aspect of the area – water at Molln, the forest at Reichraming and geology at Windischgarsten – but if you're dependent on public transport the best base from which to explore it is **WINDISCHGARSTEN**, on a direct rail line from Kremsmünster. The town has a magnificent setting ringed by mountains, with the Hoher Nock (1963m) – the highest point in the Sengsengebirge – immediately to the north and the forbidding Totes Gebirge to the west. A chairlift ascends the Wubauerkogel (858m) to the east of the town, topped by a visitor centre and 21m high glass observation tower, the **Panoramaturm Wurbauerkogel** (mid-April to Oct daily 9am–5pm; €4) from which there are breathtaking views of 21 peaks over 2000m in fine weather.

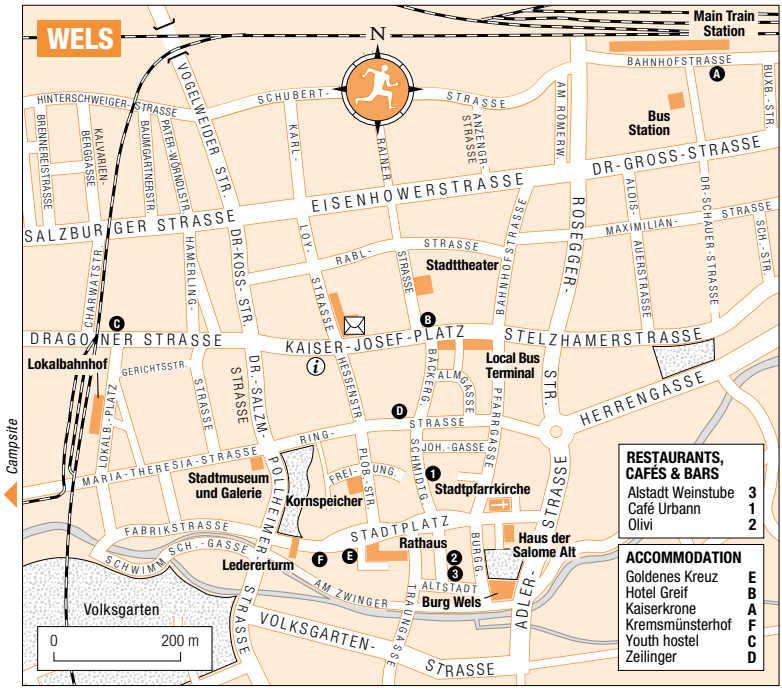
Trains from Linz and Kremsmünster arrive at Windischgarsten's station, 1km south of the town; the **tourist office** is at Hauptstr 28 (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–noon; closed Sun from Oct–April Ⓣ07562 5266, Ⓦwww.pyhrn-priel.net). If you want to **stay**, the *Schwarzes Rössl* (Hauptstr 9; Ⓣ07562/20555, Ⓦwww.schwarzes-roessl.com; 4) and *Blaue Sense* (Hauptstr 34; Ⓣ07562/5329, Ⓦwww.blauesense.at; 3) are central, and both have **restaurants**.

Wels

Despite a history stretching back to Roman times – when it was known as Ovilava – **WELS**, set amid the flat landscape southwest of Linz, lacks Steyr's drama. It is, however, the second largest town in Upper Austria and, as one of the region's most important railway junctions, it's an easy place to stop off for an hour or two – just long enough to explore the small but handsome Altstadt.

The Town

The **Altstadt**'s showpiece is the **Stadtplatz**, a long, relatively narrow space, closed off at one end by the town's last surviving gateway, or **Ledererturm**, erected in 1376. The square's attractive, mostly Baroque, facades feature some very fine plasterwork, particularly on the imperial-yellow **Rathaus** from 1748; but by far the most exotic and distinctive building is the Renaissance **Haus der Salome Alt**, with its rich trompe l'oeil brickwork, patterned with red-and-white diapers and ornate, stone window surrounds. The house was once home to Hans Sachs – the most famous of Nuremberg's medieval *Meistersänger*, who wrote his first poems at the school in Wels – but it gets its name from Salome



Alt, mistress of Wolf Dietrich, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, who moved here after Dietrich fell from power and was imprisoned in 1612. Opposite the Haus der Salome Alt stands the **Stadtpfarrkirche**, Gothic and fairly undistinguished but for a finely preserved Romanesque west door and some excellent medieval stained glass in the chancel.

Behind Salome Alt's house is the imperial **Burg Wels** (Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat 2–5pm, Sun 10am–4pm; €3.70), where the emperor Maximilian I died in 1519, having been refused bed and board by the folk of Innsbruck, who feared he wouldn't pay his bills. Maximilian was eventually buried in Wiener Neustadt (see p.207), though his tomb remains in Innsbruck (see p.464). In the 1980s, Burg Wels was converted into a cultural centre and local history museum, the latter with an emphasis on agriculture and bread-making. The town's best Roman remains are on show in the **Minoritenkloster** (same times and price as above), a former monastery on Minoritenplatz behind the Rathaus, where the finds include a tiny second-century AD bronze *Venus of Wels*, several graves sporting sphinxes and lions, a conical milestone, hoards of coins, and patches of mosaic.

Practicalities

Wels **tourist office**, Kaiser-Josef-Platz 22 (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm; ⓣ07242/434950, ⓦwww.wels.at/tourismus), two blocks north of Stadtplatz, can help you find accommodation. Many of Wel's **hotels**, like the comfortable *Hotel Greif*, Kaiser-Josef-Platz 50/51 (ⓣ07242/453610, ⓦwww.greif-hotel.at; ⑤), cater for the business crowd, but there are cheaper options, such as the

excellent *Kremsmünstererhof* (☎07242/46623; ✉kremsmuenstererhof@liwest.at; 3), a converted monastic lodge on Stadtplatz with a fine arcaded courtyard, and the nearby *Goldenes Kreuz* (☎07242/46623; 3), a characterful Jugendstil inn. Of the town's *Gasthöfe*, no-frills *Zeilinger*, Ringstr 29 (☎07242/47440, ⓦwww.pension-zeilinger.liwest.at; 3) is most central. Wels' **youth hostel**, Dragonerstr 22 (☎07242/235 7570) is also central.

Café Urbann, Schmidtgasse 20 (closed Sun), is Wels' prime **Kaffeehaus**; another option is the *Kremsmünstererhof,* Stadtplatz 62 (daily 7am–10pm), which also has a *Wirtshaus* offering the usual soups and schnitzels at reasonable prices. *Olivi*, Hafergasse 1 (closed Sun), is a smart Italian restaurant in an alley off the southern side of the Stadtplatz. The same street boasts some decent places to **drink**, including *Altstadt Weinstube*, a good spot to sample Austrian wines.

Wels is Upper Austria's second cultural centre after Linz, so there's usually **live entertainment** to enjoy. The main stage at the Stadttheater, on Rainerstrasse, plays host to everything from opera to comedy, while *Im Kornspeicher*, Freiung 15, is less mainstream, staging cabaret, dance and jazz.

The Innviertel

The River Inn forms the western border between Bavaria and Upper Austria, from just above Braunau to its confluence with the Danube at Passau. The region between the Inn and Danube, known as the **Innviertel**, is rich, rolling farming country reminiscent of Bavaria – until 1779, and briefly again during the Napoleonic period, it belonged to the duchy of Bavaria. Inevitably, this gentle landscape can't compete with the alpine scenery further south, and most visitors pass straight through, but there are three picturesque border towns that make an interesting introduction to Austria: **Braunau-am-Inn**, **Obernberg-am-Inn** and, above all, **Schärding**.

The region is relatively easy to get to by public transport, with frequent **trains** from Linz and Wels to Schärding and Braunau (sometimes involving one or more changes). Travelling between Schärding, Obernberg and Braunau is more problematic, with no direct bus linking all three.

Braunau-am-Inn

BRAUNAU-AM-INN, in the western corner of Upper Austria, is saddled with the unfortunate legacy of being Adolf Hitler's birthplace, which rather overshadows the fact that it is also a very handsome border town. Lined with pretty, pastel-coloured houses, the town's **Stadtplatz** runs north–south, its northern end abutting the bridge over the Inn to Germany, while its southern end is closed by the imposing medieval **Torturm**, crowned with a tiny carillon. Braunau's chief landmark, though, is the spectacularly tall stone tower of the fifteenth-century **Stephanskirche** west of the main square, a hybrid affair decorated with blind Gothic tracery and topped by a giant onion dome, which reaches to a height of nearly 100m. The exterior is plastered with fine grave slabs, including (on the north side) that of Hans Staininger, whose curly beard reaches down to his toes. The interior features net vaulting and some fine Baroque side chapels, including one flanked by a superb pair of grimly reaping skeletons.

Outside **Hitler's birthplace** at Salzburger Vorstadt 15, south of the Torturm, stands a slab of granite from Mauthausen (see p.230), inscribed with the words "For peace, freedom and democracy/never again fascism/in memory of the millions who died." Hitler's father, Alois, had been a customs inspector in

Braunau for eighteen years, and was onto his third marriage (to his niece, and former maid, 23 years his junior) when the future Führer was born in 1889. The family eventually settled in Leonding, near Linz.

Braunau's **train station** lies about 1km east of the Stadtplatz, at whose northern end you'll find the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 1.30–5pm; ⓣ07722/62644, ⓦwww.tourismus-braunau.at). Two rather old-fashioned **hotels** grace Stadtplatz: *Hotel Post* (ⓣ07722/63415; ⓦwww.hotel-post-braunau.at; ❸) is the plusher of the two, with all rooms en suite; *Hotel Gann* (ⓣ07722/63206; ⓦwww.oberoesterreich.at/hotel-gann; ❸) is simpler and cheaper. Braunau's **youth hostel**, Osternbergerstr 57 (ⓣ07722/63136, ⓔjugendherberge-braunau@osternberg.net), is 1km southwest of the Altstadt; a **campsite** (ⓣ07722/87357; mid-April to Sept) is a similar distance to the southeast – follow Salzburger Strasse south from Stadtplatz then turn left onto Quellenweg. *Bogner* on Stadtplatz (no. 47) brews its own **beer** and serves pizzas, snacks and full meals; the *Post* has a restaurant offering standard Austrian fare and there's a scattering of Chinese and other ethnic choices in the Altstadt. *Bar Silica* next to the *Post* is stylish, gay-friendly and open until 4am at weekends.

Obernberg-am-Inn

OBERNBERG-AM-INN, 25km downstream from Braunau, is the smallest of the trio of pretty towns that dot the banks of the Inn. The wide central **Marktplatz**, lined with boldly coloured Baroque houses sporting beautifully shaped gables, is, if anything, even lovelier than the one at Braunau. Two houses stand out for their exceptional Rococo stucco-work: the bile-green *Café Woerndle*, and the adjacent pastel-pink apothecary, with a statue of the Virgin occupying centre stage. Once you've taken in the Marktplatz's prettiness there's nothing specific to keep you here, though you can **eat** Italian or Austrian food from €7.50 at the *Gasthof zur Post*, and **stay** on Marktplatz at the *Goldenes Kreuz* (ⓣ07758/2202; ⓦwww.goldeneskreuz.com; ❷). There's also a **campsite** (ⓣ07758/2203; open all year), 1km southwest of the Altstadt, off Salzburgerstrasse.

Schärding

SCHÄRDING, 20km downstream of Obernberg, is more picturesque still, with a large, immaculate Altstadt surrounded by vestiges of its original fortifications. The sloping **Stadtplatz** is broken up by clusters of houses, but its distinguishing feature is the much-photographed **Silberzeile** – "Silver Row", so called because of its wealthy inhabitants – an uninterrupted, multi-coloured parade of Baroque gables that form a wave-like roofscape. The Altstadt's cobbled backstreets are fun to explore, and the town retains several of its original gate towers, one of which, on Schlossgasse, leads to the **Schlosspark**, laid out on the site of the town's once-mighty castle, and from which you get fine views across the Inn to the German town of Neuhaus-am-Inn.

From Schärding, trains and boats run north to Passau. Boats on the Passau run (Tues–Sun April–Oct; ⓦwww.innschifffahrt.at) leave from the Schifffahrtsstation at the northern tip of the Altstadt; trains and buses from Schärding's **train station**, 1.5km north of the Altstadt, beyond the River Pram. There are a few **private rooms** (❷) in the Altstadt, which you can book through the **tourist office** at Innbruckstr 29 (April–May Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; June–Sept Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 11am–3pm; Oct–March Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm; ⓣ07712/43000, ⓦwww.schaerding.at) which overlooks the Inn by the bridge over to Germany. The finest place to **stay** is the family-run *Hotel Förstinger*, Unterer Stadtplatz 3 (ⓣ07712/2302, ⓦwww.hotelforstinger.at; ❻); one

Cycling along the Danube and Inn

Widely considered one of the world's best cycle touring destinations, the **Danube Cycleway** is a deservedly popular artery through some of Austria's most interesting cities and rural lowlands. Beginning in Passau, just over the German border, the route passes through Linz (see p.217) and then close to Enns (p.231) and Mauthausen (p.230) before entering Lower Austria and some particularly scenic stretches in the Wachau (p.170) before heading on to Tulln (p.156) and Vienna (p.59). It's worth pressing on to Bratislava in Slovakia for the satisfaction of cycling Austria's entire length of the river.

The cycleway is notable for the quality of its signposting and user-friendliness, with a good network of boats and trains along much of the route to take the strain when you've had enough or the weather turns. Given this, and the forgivingly flat nature of most of the route, the 365-kilometre journey from Passau to Bratislava is recommended even for occasional cyclists who should expect it to take around two weeks. For further information see Ⓦ www.radfahren.at, the dedicated cycling site of Upper Austria, and Ⓦ www.danube.at which provides tourist information for the whole Austrian leg of the trip.

For a brief introduction consider the **Inn Cycleway** between Schärding and Braunau or completing a highly recommended loop to Passau from Schärding – following the left bank of the Inn to Passau on German soil before returning on the Austrian side – a 20km loop that is likely to involve around three hours cycling and makes a great day-trip. The tourist office in Schärding has a free cycle map and a list of local bike rental places.

cheaper option in the Altstadt is the comfortable *Hotel Scheurecker*, Innbruckstr 6–8 (Ⓣ07712/44040, Ⓦwww.schaerdingerhof.at; 4). The best place for typically Austrian **food**, washed down with local Baumgartner Bier, is the *Wirthaus zur Bums'n*, Denisgasse 8.

Travel details

Trains

Linz to: Braunau-am-Inn (9 daily; 1hr 45min–2hr 15min); Freistadt (8 daily; 1hr 10min); Graz (8 daily; 2hr 50min–3hr 50min); Kefermarkt (12 daily; 42min–1hr); Kremsmünster (hourly; 30–45min); Schärding (hourly; 1hr 15min); Steyr (every 30min–1hr; 45–55min); Wels (2–3hr; 15–25min); Windischgarsten (every 2hr; 1hr 20min).

Wels to: Braunau-am-Inn (every 1–2hr; 1hr 25min–2hr); Passau (every 1–2hr; 50min–1hr 20min); Schärding (hourly; 45min–1hr 53min).

Buses

Braunau to: Obernberg-am-Inn (Mon–Fri 1 daily; 45min).

Linz to: Freistadt (every 30min–1hr; 45min–1hr 10min); St Florian (1 weekly (Sat); 30min); Wilhering (every 30min; 10min).

Boats

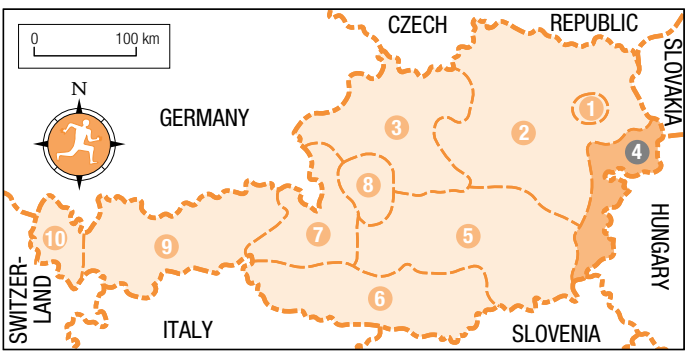
Linz to: Krems (July–Sept twice weekly; 4hr 20min); Passau (May–Oct Tues–Sun; 6hr 20min).

Flights

Linz to: London (4 weekly; 1hr 55min).

4

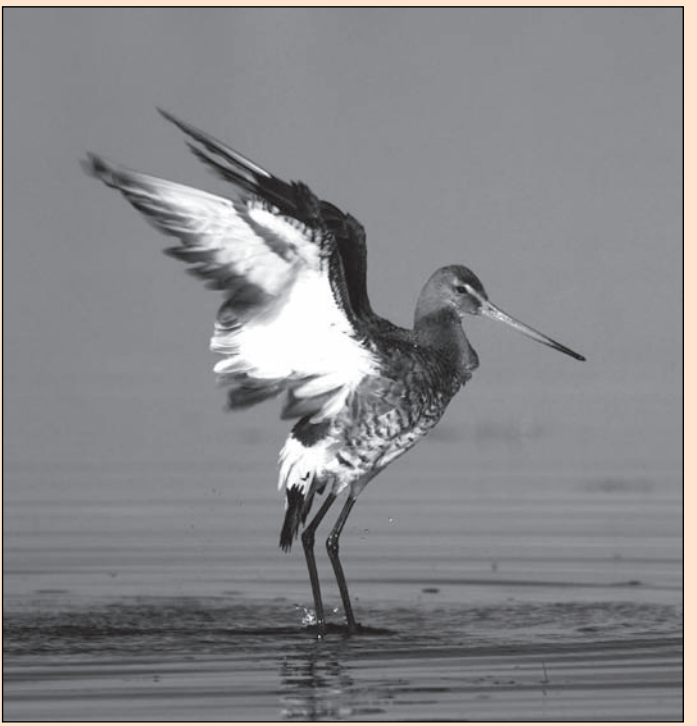
Burgenland



CHAPTER 4

Highlights

- **Neusiedler See** Fringed by reed beds and vineyards, this steppe lake is perfect for cycling around, birdwatching and watersports. see p.252
- **Rust** The prettiest of the Neusiedler See wine villages with a well-preserved Altstadt and the tiny medieval Fischerkirche. see p.254
- **Taubenkobel, Schützen** Top-notch Pannonian food you can eat al fresco in the restaurant's beautiful garden. see p.257
- **Birdlife, Seewinkel** Austria's top birding destination is home to spoonbills, egrets, storks and the great bustard, Europe's heaviest bird. see p.260
- **Chamber Music Festival, Lockenhaus** Wonderful Kammermusikfest set in a small town with a glorious Baroque church and an impressive medieval fortress. see p.261



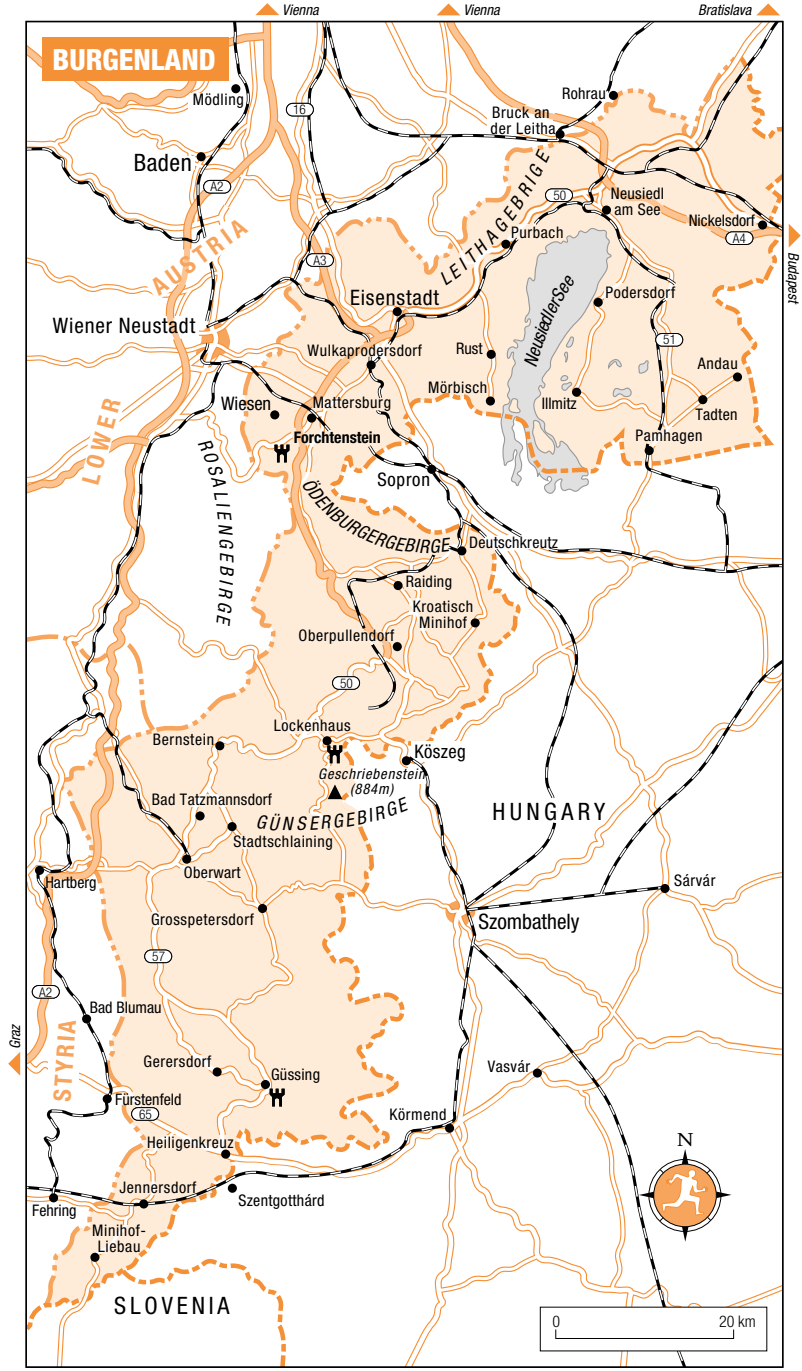
▲ Neusiedler See

4

Burgenland

The diminutive province of **Burgenland** (Ⓦwww.burgenland.at) is the easternmost and the least Austrian Land of all. An integral part of Hungary from the seventeenth century, it was handed over to Austria at the end of World War I, only after a controversial plebiscite (see box, p.247) which left the region's natural capital, Ödenburg (Sopron), in Hungary. Naturally enough, with an awkward salient virtually squeezing Burgenland in two, the province faced enormous problems, not just in terms of communications but in forging any sense of collective identity. Add to these the Russian occupation and the imposition of the Iron Curtain after World War II, and it's easy to see why the last couple of decades have been by far the best yet in the region's history. Burgenland has long been a predominantly German-speaking region – hence why it was handed over to Austria in the first place – and the residual **Hungarian**-speaking community now makes up less than three percent of the total population. In fact, the Hungarians are outnumbered by the region's ten percent **Croat** minority, whose ancestors were encouraged by the local Hungarian lords to settle here in the sixteenth century, to revitalize an area devastated by the Turkish army. However, apart from the odd bilingual sign, and the names of some of the border villages, you'll hardly notice the Croat presence, whose assimilation continues apace.

In the absence of Ödenburg, the small provincial town of **Eisenstadt** took over the regional administrative role. What brings most people to the town nowadays, however, is its affiliation with **Josef Haydn**, who spent some thirty years here in the second half of the eighteenth century, under the patronage of the powerful Hungarian **Esterházy family**. After Eisenstadt, the most popular destination in Burgenland is the nearby reed-fringed **Neusiedler See**, the country's largest inland lake and the only one in Europe with no natural outlet. For the Austrians, this is the closest the country gets to a coastline, and many come here purely and simply for a fix of beach culture. The **wine-growing** villages around the See have a distinctly Hungarian feel to them, as does the flat *puszta* (steppe) landscape and the consistently warm summer weather. The rest of Burgenland, south of the region's five-kilometre-thin "waist", receives a tiny fraction of the tourists that pack the resorts of the Neusiedler See – and with some justification. The rolling, forested countryside is attractive enough, but there are very few places you'd go out of your way to visit.


BURGENLAND
Vienna
Vienna
Bratislava
Budapest
Graz
Mödling
Baden
Bruck an der Leitha
Rohrau
Neusiedl am See
Nickelsdorf
Purbach
Podersdorf
Eisenstadt
Wiener Neustadt
Wulkaprodersdorf
Rust
Neusiedler See
Andau
Tadten
Pamhagen
Mörbisch
Illmitz
Wiesen
Mattersburg
Forchtenstein
Sopron
Deutschkreutz
Raiding
Kroatisch Minihof
Oberpullendorf
Lockenhaus
Bernstein
Köszeg
Geschriebenstein (884m)
Bad Tatzmannsdorf
Stadtschlaining
Oberwart
Hartberg
Grosspetersdorf
Sárvár
Szombathely
Bad Blumau
Gerersdorf
Güssing
Fürstenfeld
Vasvár
Körmend
Heiligenkreuz
Jennersdorf
Szentgotthárd
Fehring
Minihof-Liebau
AUSTRIA
LOWER
STYRIA
LEITHAGEBIRGE
ROSALIENGEBIRGE
ÖDENBURGERGEBIRGE
GÜNSERGEBIRGE
HUNGARY
SLOVENIA
16
A2
A3
50
A4
51
57
65
N
0
20 km

The fight for Burgenland

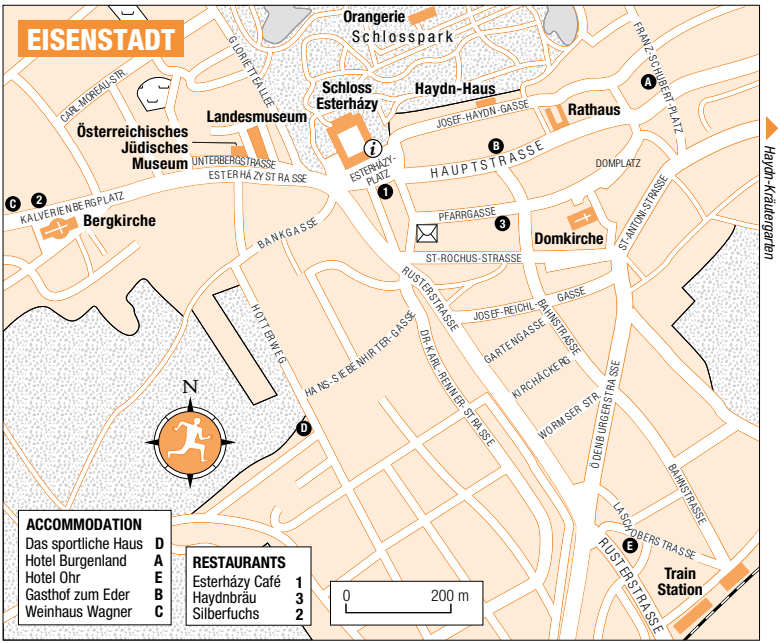
They may have shared an empire, but when the ruling dynasty fell in 1918, Austria and Hungary were at each other's throats in no time, arguing over their mutual border. The disputed territory comprised the four predominantly German-speaking border districts of western Hungary: **Pressburg** (Pozsony, now Bratislava), **Wieselburg** (Moson), **Ödenburg** (Sopron) and **Eisenburg** (Vas). With no historical collective term for this area to hand, the Austrians, in the process of staking their claim, had to invent a name for the proposed province, until then unofficially referred to as Deutsch-Westungarn (German West Hungary). They eventually decided on Vierburgenland, not because of the number of castles in the region, but because of the endings of the four provinces.

Pressburg, however, was already occupied by the Czechs, and with only a forty percent German population, was soon disregarded; in addition, the rail line running through Wieselburg was deemed too strategically important to Hungary, and the district was taken out of the equation. In September 1919, therefore, just Eisenburg and Ödenburg provinces were added to the Austrian Republic as part of the **Treaty of St Germain** (and the "vier" was dropped from Burgenland). At this point, however, the Allies wavered in their support of the treaty. Initially, they had strongly supported the Austrian claim, preferring the Social Democrat government in Vienna to Béla Kun's Bolsheviks in Budapest. However, when Béla Kun and his Communists fell from power and were replaced in November 1919 by the authoritarian regime of Admiral Horthy, the Allies' support for the left-wing government in Vienna weakened. Matters were complicated by the fact that the Austrians, who had been deemed an "enemy state" by the Allies, had been disarmed. Not so the Hungarians, who had been dubbed a "successor state" and who promptly refused to withdraw their troops, saying they were not a party to the treaty.

Eventually, in July 1921, the Hungarians themselves were forced to sign the **Treaty of Trianon**, agreeing to secede Burgenland. Once more, however, the Hungarians resisted and, under the noses of the Allied troops supposedly overseeing the transfer, drove the Austrians back out of the area. Yielding to the Hungarian military pressure, the Allies advised the Austrians to give up Ödenburg in exchange for the rest of the district. To add a little spice to the course of events, the exiled Habsburg emperor Karl I turned up in Ödenburg on October 20, 1921, in the vain hope of resuscitating the Hungarian monarchy (see p.194). A plebiscite was finally agreed upon, whereby Ödenburg and eight surrounding rural communes would vote. The Austrians wanted the Hungarians to withdraw their troops before the plebiscite took place, and for the area to be occupied by Allied troops, but the Hungarians refused, in the end withdrawing less than a week before the December vote. Voting lists were therefore drawn up by, and the administration remained in the hands of, the Hungarians. In Ödenburg, the Hungarians got over seventy percent of the vote, but in the rural districts they narrowly lost. As a result, Burgenland lost both its natural centre and its capital. On January 1, 1922, the last border change resulting from World War I was completed, as Hungary formally accepted Ödenburg, now Sopron.

Eisenstadt and around

For a provincial capital – albeit of Austria's second smallest Land – **EISENSTADT** (Kismarton) is a tiny little place, with a population of just 12,000. Situated some 50km southeast of Vienna, where the Leithagebirge fuse gently with the Hungarian *puszta*, it became the regional capital only by default in 1921 (see box above). The town is known, above all, for its associations with the composer **Josef Haydn**, who was in the employ of the local bigwigs, the Esterházys, for most of his adult life. Haydn may be the main draw nowadays, but the town also has a well-preserved **Jewish ghetto** and an excellent Jewish **museum**.



The Town

Eisenstadt's **Altstadt** comprises a mere three streets. **Domplatz**, the southernmost of the three, is open to traffic and used primarily as the local bus station; its fifteenth-century Domkirche was only given cathedral status in 1960 and, apart from its gilded pulpit and organ, is nothing special. **Hauptstrasse**, the pedestrianized main street, is prettier; among its striking facades is that of the Rathaus, with shapely Baroque gables, three oriel windows and lively folk paintings of the seven virtues and a trio of biblical scenes including the Judgement of Solomon.

Schloss Esterházy

Nothing prepares you for the sheer scale of the **Schloss Esterházy** (guided tours: April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 10am & 2pm; €5; ⓦ www.schloss-esterhazy.at), which presides over Esterházy-Platz, at the western end of Hauptstrasse. Built as a medieval fortress with bulky corner towers, the Schloss received a Baroque conversion, and was finally redesigned in Neoclassical style (though you can't actually see the fancy, colonnaded north facade overlooking the gardens). The result is a sort of oversized French chateau, daubed in a fresh coat of imperial ochre-yellow paint set off by smart green shutters. The Schloss is now used as offices by the provincial government, but a few rooms are open for guided tours, which set off on the hour and are usually in German, so ask for the English notes.

There's a choice of guided tours, but the regular one (50min) will satiate most visitors. Whichever tour you take, you will get to see the only truly spectacular room, the **Haydnsaal**, its coved ceiling smothered with more than thirty colourful frescoes, its walls lined with painted roundels of

Hungarian heroes. The acoustics are tremendous, and Haydn himself conducted numerous performances of his own music here. The best way to visit is to catch one of the weekly live concerts (May–Oct) or get here for the **Internationale Haydntage** (Ⓦ www.haydnfestival.at), in the first half of September. That way, you won't have to endure the second half of the guided tour which takes you round the **Esterházy-Ausstellung**, which contains Esterházy family treasures, and traces the history of the clan, who still own the Schloss and remain among the wealthiest landowners in the country. At the end of this endurance test, you emerge in another fine concert hall, the **Empiresaal**, which takes its name from the Neoclassical pastel green, blue and brown trompe l'oeil decor. To get to the shady greenery of the **Schlosspark**, head down Glorietteallee; as well as the Neoclassical folly of the Leopoldinentempel, there's a vast Orangerie, now restored to its former glory, and used for exhibitions.

Unterberg: the Jewish quarter

A hundred metres or so west of the Schloss lies the old Jewish quarter of **Unterberg**, established as a walled ghetto back in medieval times, and for centuries home to a relatively large Jewish population. All 446 of the town's Jews were deported to the camps shortly after the Anschluss in 1938, and today there are very few Jewish families left in Eisenstadt, though Unterberg has since been repopulated. As you enter the ghetto's main street of Unterbergstrasse, you can see one of the two stone piers between which a chain was placed on the Jewish Sabbath (a practice that was continued right up until 1938). The ghetto itself – comprised of five streets and two cemeteries to the north of Esterházystrasse – remains more or less physically intact.

Further up Unterbergstrasse on the right, at no. 6, is the **Österreichisches Jüdisches Museum** (May–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Nov–April Mon–Thurs 9am–4pm, Fri 9am–1pm; €3.70; Ⓦ www.ojm.at), in the house that once belonged to Samson Wertheimer. Financial guru to three successive Habsburg emperors, Wertheimer became the first rabbi of Eisenstadt, and was appointed Landesrabbiner (Chief Rabbi) of the Hungarian Jewry in 1693 by Emperor Karl VI. The museum's permanent exhibition on the first floor is a fairly standard rundown on Judaism, plus models of several of Vienna's now demolished synagogues and of Eisenstadt's old ghetto. On the first floor is the **Wertheimer'sche Schul**, Wertheimer's private synagogue, built in the early eighteenth century, but whose trompe l'oeil decor dates from the early nineteenth. It was one of the few in the Third Reich to survive Kristallnacht, perhaps because by then Eisenstadt had already been cleared of Jews, and was used in the decade after World War II by Jewish soldiers of the Red Army.

Another wealthy Jewish burgher's former home – the rather attractive house with the corner oriel at the junction of Unterbergstrasse and Museumgasse – has been converted into the **Landesmuseum** (Tues–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm; €3). The building itself is a lovely, rambling mansion, with a plant-filled rooftop loggia, and, in the cellar, there's a whole series of impressive Roman mosaics, the largest of which features Bellerophon killing the hybrid monster Chimera. The local history section on the first floor is particularly strong on the territorial dispute after World War I, with propaganda posters from the period, such as Death in Hungarian costume playing the fiddle over Ödenburg. Finally, you shouldn't miss Franz Liszt's plushly furnished Blauer Salon, transferred here in its entirety from the Schottenhof in Vienna, where the local-born composer stayed when in the capital from 1869 to 1886.

Haydn's Eisenstadt: the Haydn-Haus and Bergkirche

The house that Haydn bought in Eisenstadt, where he kept chickens, two horses and probably a cow, is now the **Haydn-Haus** (April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; ⓦ www.haydnhaus.at; €3.50), on Josef-Haydn-Gasse. This was Haydn's home on and off from 1766 to 1788, though there's no attempt here to re-create his abode in any way. More evocative is the **Haydn-Kräutergarten** (May–Sept daily 9am–5pm; €3), the composer's "kitchen garden" complete with wooden summerhouse, situated east of the old town walls, on Bürgerspittalgasse,

Haydn is buried in Eisenstadt in the squat, Baroque **Bergkirche** (Palm Sunday to Oct daily 9am–noon & 1–5pm; also by appointment; €2.50; ⓣ 02682/62638, ⓦ www.haydnkirche.at), which, as its name suggests, is located on raised ground 500m west of the Schloss, on the other side of Unterberg. The church interior is a trompe l'oeil fantasy in pinks and greys, but most folk come here to visit the purpose-built **Haydn-Mausoleum**, erected by the Esterházys at the west end of the church in 1932 in order to receive Haydn's decapitated corpse. At the time his head was still in Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, to which it had been bequeathed in 1895, having been stolen by one of Haydn's friends, a keen phrenologist, shortly after the composer's burial in Vienna in 1809. Finally, in 1954, Haydn's head was reunited with his body, and the whole of Haydn now lies in the marble tomb under the mournful gaze of four lounging cherubs.

The Bergkirche's other star attraction (covered by the same ticket) is the **Kalvarienberg** (Calvary Hill), accessible from the outside on the eastern side of the church. Here, steps lead up to a small chapel, beside which a turnstile lets

Josef Haydn

Well, here I sit in my wilderness, forsaken like a poor waif, almost without any human society, melancholy, full of the memories of glorious days gone by – alas, long gone! And who knows when these days shall return? Those wonderful parties... Here at Estoras [Esterháza], no one asks me: 'Would you like some chocolate, with or without milk? Will you take some coffee, black or café Liègois? What may I offer you, my dear Haydn? Would you like a vanilla or pineapple ice?

Letter to Maria Anna von Genzinger, February 9, 1790, from Josef Haydn

Of the big three classical composers, **Josef Haydn** (1732–1809) is seen as coming a poor third to Mozart and Beethoven, despite the fact that his music was in many ways just as radical – not only did he entrench the symphony, the string quartet and the sonata in the cultural landscape, he also experimented with the rigid Baroque symmetry of classical music, often developing a single theme in a way that prefigured much nineteenth-century music. Part of the problem undoubtedly lies in the ordinariness of both Haydn's character and his life – during his lifetime, he acquired the nickname "Papa Jo" for his generally amiable personality (notwithstanding his boorish behaviour towards his wife).

Haydn was born in the Lower Austrian village of Rohrau (see p.198). His father, a master wheelwright who played the harp, recognized his son's musical talents, and at the age of 5 Josef joined the choir of the Stephansdom in Vienna, where he was a pupil for the next nine years. At this point, in 1749 Haydn's voice broke, and he was kicked out of the choir, his little brother Michael becoming the new star pupil. Haydn then endured a difficult, poverty-stricken decade as a freelance musician, which finally ended with his appointment in 1758 as music director for Count von Morzin, a rich Bohemian nobleman. Two years later, Haydn made the biggest

you into a labyrinth of mini-chapels begun in 1705, recounting the story of the Passion through a series of theatrical tableaux of full-size statues. First, you enter a subterranean grotto, then you wind your way round the outside up to the Crucifixion tableau on top of the church (with great views over Burgenland), and finally back down to the Entombment on the other side.

Practicalities

Eisenstadt's **train station** is just ten minutes' walk southeast of the town centre; **buses** arrive and depart from Domplatz. You'll find the **tourist office** (April–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–1pm; Nov–March Mon–Thurs 8am–4pm, Fri 8am–1pm; ⓣ02682/67390, ⓦwww.eisenstadt-tourism.at) in the east wing of the Schloss. Eisenstadt has only a limited choice of **accommodation**. For hostel-style lodgings, try *Das sportliche Haus*, Hotterweg 67 (ⓣ02682/62326, ⓦwww.bfv.at/spo_haus; ❸), a functional place aimed at visiting sports teams. Alternatively, you can stay in comfort at *Weinhaus Eva-Maria Wagner* (ⓣ02682/63310, ⓔevawagner@eisendorf.at; ❸), a vintner's just beyond the Bergkirche at Wiener Str 10–12. The excellent cooking at the modern *Hotel Ohr*, Rusterstr 51 (ⓣ02682/62460, ⓦwww.hotelohr.at; ❻), is a major part of its appeal; the rooms themselves are pristine and simply furnished. Eisenstadt's largest hotel is the equally modern *Hotel Burgenland*, on Franz-Schubert-Platz (ⓣ02682/696, ⓦwww.hotelburgenland.at; ❼), which boasts an indoor swimming pool and sauna. If you're **camping**, it's probably best to pitch your tent at one of the sites on the western shores of the Neusiedler See, and come to Eisenstadt on a day-trip.

mistake of his life, as he later saw it, and married Maria Keller, the daughter of a hairdresser, with whom he could neither get on nor conceive children. She showed virtually no interest in his work, and is alleged to have used his manuscripts as pastry-pan linings and curl papers.

More auspiciously, in 1761 Haydn was appointed assistant Kapellmeister to the Esterházy family at Eisenstadt. Haydn's patron, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy, was a keen music lover – he even published his own songbook, *Harmonia Celestis* – but he died the following year. Luckily, he was succeeded by Prince Nikolaus (Miklós) "the Ostentatious", another music fan and a lavish entertainer. After a visit to Versailles in 1764, Prince Nikolaus decided to establish his own version of the French chateau, on the other side of the Neusiedler See from Eisenstadt. Although equipped with a theatre, opera house and a marionette theatre, the palace – named Esterháza (Fertöd) – was intended only as a summer residence. In the end, however, it became a more or less permanent home for Prince Nikolaus and for Haydn, now the family's chief Kapellmeister, who was, in any case, glad of the chance to escape his wife and sleep with his mistress, the young Italian mezzo-soprano, Luigia Polzelli.

In 1790, Prince Nikolaus died; his successor, Anton, was less interested in music (and had less money). The family's court orchestra was disbanded within 48 hours of Nikolaus's death, but as a sign of respect for his loyalty the Esterházys paid Haydn a pension and allowed him to keep his title. He immediately moved to Vienna, embarked on two long tours of England, and enjoyed late, but great acclaim, letting his hair down and earning himself a great deal of money at the same time. His final years were plagued by illness, and he died during the second French occupation of Vienna. Such was his renown that – so the story goes – Napoleon placed a guard of honour outside his house, and a French Hussars officer came and sang an aria from *The Creation* at his deathbed.

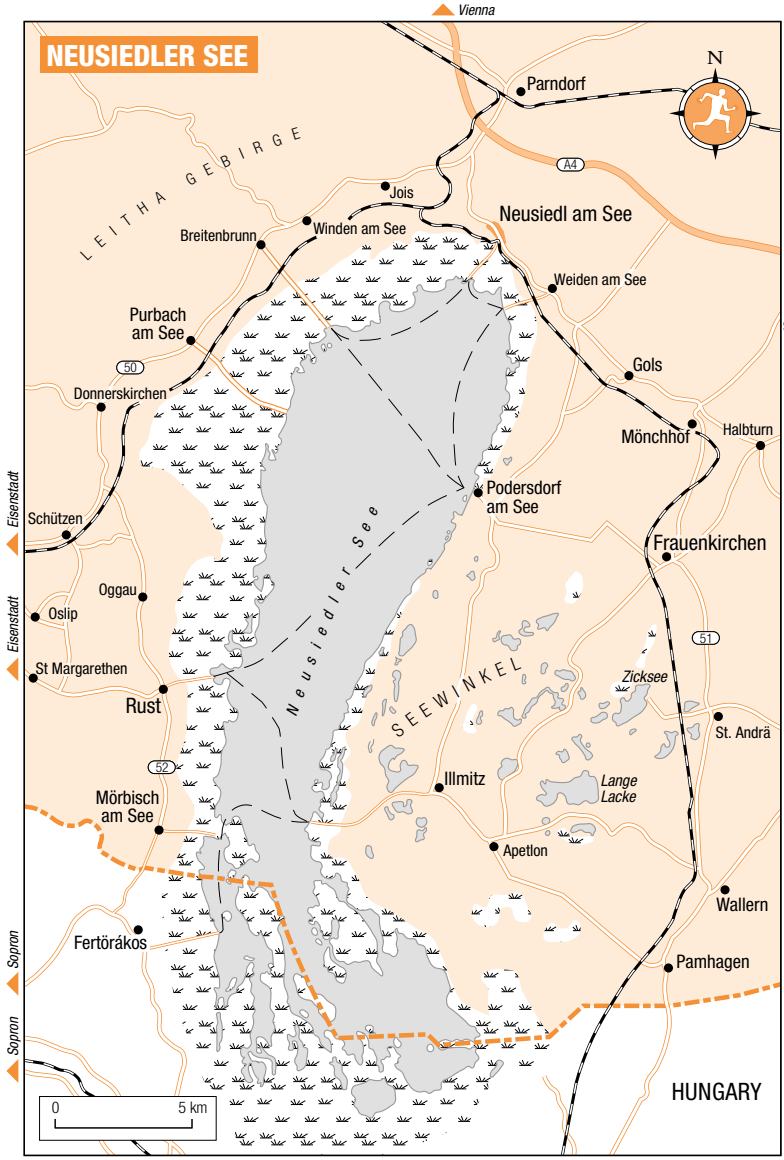
A nice place to **eat and drink** alfresco, and enjoy a view of the Schloss, is the smart, but reasonably priced *Esterházy Café* (Ⓦwww.imesterhazy.at), directly opposite in the former stables and winter riding school, on Esterházy-Platz. Alternatively, *Silberfuchs*, near the Bergkirche on Kalvarienbergplatz, offers a good range of Austrian dishes and daily specials for around €6. Another good bet is the *Haydnbräu*, Pfarrgasse 22 (Ⓦwww.haydnbraeu.at), a modern microbrewery where you can wash down your pub food with beer brewed on the premises.

Burg Forchtenstein

Even in a border region renowned for its castles, the fourteenth century **Burg Forchtenstein** (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm; Schatzkammer €10; Waffensammlung €8; Kombi-Karte €15; Ⓦwww.esterhazy.at/burg-forchtenstein), 20km southwest of Eisenstadt (change buses in Mattersburg), stands head and shoulders above the rest. First off, it occupies an absolutely unassailable position on the eastern slopes of the Rosaliengebirge, with the most stupendous views across the *puszta*. It also contains one of the finest *Waffensammlung* (arms collections) in the country, courtesy of the Esterházy family, who have owned the property since 1622. It was the only fortress in the region not to be captured by the Turks in the 1680s. When the Turkish threat receded, however, Forchtenstein was deemed too uncomfortable for regular use, and became the family arms depot, and as early as 1815, a museum. You're free to walk round the **Schatzkammer**, with its dazzling jewelled armour, intriguing automata and Meissen porcelain, on your own, but to visit the **Waffensammlung and Zeughaus**, you must join a guided tour (in German or English). The weapons remain *in situ*, as if the family's private troops might rush in at any moment and gird themselves up, and are displayed along with Turkish spoils and numerous family portraits. For those with surplus energy, there are further temporary exhibitions in the castle's portrait gallery or **Ahnengalerie** (€8). Forchtenstein makes a rewarding **day-trip** from Eisenstadt (or Wiener Neustadt), but public transport connections are pretty dire, and would need careful planning. For **food**, the *Burgstüberl*, outside the castle gates, cooks up simple, inexpensive fish and meat dishes.

Neusiedler See

Eisenstadt is close enough to **Neusiedler See** (Ⓦwww.neusiedlersee.com) – Fertö to the Hungarians – to make a day-trip to its western shores perfectly possible, though you'll get more out of the area by staying over for a night or two. It's quite unlike anywhere else in Austria. Fringed by giant reed beds and vineyards, and set amidst the flat steppe landscape of the *puszta*, the area feels more Hungarian than any other part of Burgenland. The lake itself is a strange ecological phenomenon: it has no major water source feeding into it – the water just sits on the surface of the land, and has a slightly saline quality to it. Never much more than one or two metres deep, the water has been known to dry up completely (lastly in the 1860s), and, if the wind blows persistently in one direction, it can literally take the lake with it, leaving one shore bereft. The lake's shallowness means, of course, it warms up very quickly in summer, making it a perfect spot for **watersports**. Its reed beds, meanwhile, are home to a wide variety of **bird life**, and the Seewinkel wetlands to the east of the lake are especially popular with ornithologists. Another activity that's big around these parts is **cycling**: a cycle path winds its way through the reed beds, passing



through Hungary along the southern shore in order to make the full circuit of around 100km. You can also take your bike on the various boats that crisscross the See in summer months (see box, p.254),

Neusiedl am See is the chief town and transport hub, but the two most photogenic places around the See are the prosperous wine-producing town of **Rust** and the neighbouring village of **Mörbisch am See**, flush with the Hungarian border. If you're more interested in beach culture, then head for

Getting to, around and across the Neusiedler See

Train services link a few of the villages on the western shore with Eisenstadt and Neusiedl am See, as well as some of the villages of the Seewinkel. Elsewhere, you'll have to rely on buses. Also worth looking out for are the **boat services** provided by a number of companies from April until September; the Mörbisch–Illmitz route is one of the most frequent (May–Oct every 30min 9am–6pm). **Bike hire** (*Radverleih*) is available from Neusiedl am See train station and from numerous outlets in each of the resorts; a day's rental ranges from €6 to €12, depending on the bike. It's also worth asking at one of the region's tourist offices about any special deals on combined tickets covering boat, bus and/or train travel.

Although the southern shore of the lake is in Hungary, it's easy enough to cross the border: if you're a citizen of the EU, USA or Canada, you can simply take your passport with you; if you're not, you may need to obtain a visa, so check before you set out. The Mörbisch–Fertörákos border point (daily: April, May & Oct 8am–8pm; June–Sept 6am–10pm) is for pedestrians and cyclists only, while the Pamhagen–Fertöd border crossing (open daily all year; 6am–midnight) is for cars, too. There are also boats from Mörbisch to Fertörákos (May–Sept 4 daily).

Podersdorf am See, on the eastern shore, as this is the only place with both village and resort on the lake. All the other villages around the See are separated from the shoreline by several kilometres of reed beds, and therefore have split personalities: the old village centre, usually surrounded by vineyards, and home to numerous *Heurigen* or *Buschenschänken*, and the modern development on the See itself, often featuring a campsite, a restaurant, a small beach, and an open-air swimming pool among copious other leisure facilities. From April to September, you usually have to pay an entrance fee of up to €4 per day to gain access to the See, unless you have a **Neusiedler See Card** (see below). The best time to visit the Neusiedler See is from May until September, as many of the facilities close down in winter; however, mosquitoes can be quite a problem in the height of summer, as can flash thunderstorms.

Rust and around

By far the prettiest place on Neusiedler See is **RUST** (Ruszt), 13km east of Eisenstadt. While most other settlements are strung out along a single main street, Rust is a proper town, albeit a very small one, built from the profits of the local wine trade, and with a well-preserved Altstadt centred on the lovely cobbled square of **Rathausplatz**. The Rathaus itself, a seventeenth-century building decked out in Pompeiian red, is just one of the square's many perkily painted houses, each of which features big barn doors, and geraniums spilling out from windows flanked by French shutters. Opposite stands the **Kremayrhaus** (10am–5pm; free), which houses the town museum and plays host to most of the local cultural events. Above all, though, Rust is famous for its white **storks**,

Neusiedler See Card

If you're staying overnight in the region, then you are entitled to a free **Neusiedler See Card**, which allows you to use public transport for free, park for free and enter the See resorts for free, as well as giving you free entry to all local museums and free guided tours in Rust and Eisenstadt, plus half price on some of the lake's boats, and reductions for bike hire and other charges; take your accommodation receipt to the nearest tourist office to receive your card.

▲ Fischerkirche

whose nests perch permanently on the chimneys of just about every house in the Altstadt. Each year towards the end of March, these huge birds return to the very same chimney top, lay their eggs and rear their young, leaving around late August for warmer climes.

Overlooking the main square is the venerable **Fischerkirche** (Easter, April & Oct Mon–Sat 11am–noon & 2–3pm, Sun 11am–noon & 2–4pm; May–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–noon & 2.30–5pm, Sun 11am–noon & 2–5pm; €1), a tiny Gothic church set into the old town walls, and dating, in parts, to the thirteenth century. The interior is richly painted with medieval patterning and frescoes depicting the Crucifixion, and the cute little Baroque organ of 1705 is the oldest in Burgenland. The Fischerkirche tower is a great place from which to view the town's storks' nests; the rather handsome Baroque tower beyond the

Fischerkirche belongs to the local Protestant church, testifying to the historic strength of Hungarian Calvinism in the area.

Practicalities

Buses stop outside the post office, a short distance north of the Rathausplatz. Rust's **tourist office** (May–Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–noon; Oct–April Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–4pm; ⓣ02685/502, ⓦwww.rust.at), housed in the Rathaus, can organize private rooms – if it's closed, there's a free phone for booking **accommodation** outside the office underneath the archway. The classiest (and priciest) place to stay within the Altstadt itself is the sixteenth-century *Rusterhof* (ⓣ02685/60793, ⓦwww.mooslechners.at; March–Nov; ❸), on Rathausplatz; the same couple, the Mooslechners, run the larger *Bürgerhaus*, one block north at Hauptstr 1 – all the suites have self-catering facilities and booking ahead is pretty much essential. A more reasonably priced choice is *Pension Magdalenenhof* (ⓣ02685/373, ⓕ02685/373–4; ❹), at Feldgasse 40, off the road to Eisenstadt, which has a swimming pool in its garden. Another option is the modern *Hotel Sifkovits* (ⓣ02685/276, ⓦwww.sifkovits.at; March–Nov; ❺), just outside the Altstadt on the road to the lake. Like all the settlements around the See, Rust has a small lakeside development, Seebad Rust (ⓦwww.seebadrust.at), 2km east through the reed beds. Here, you'll find Rust's purpose-built **HI Jugendgästehaus** (ⓣ02685/591), complete with adjacent **Familiengästehaus** (❸), which offers doubles, triples and quads, plus a **campsite,** *Storchencamp Rust* (ⓣ02685/595, ⓦwww.gmeiner.co.at; April–Oct), a marina, a beach and all the usual facilities for bike and boat hire, windsurfing and so forth.

The most ambitious dining in Rust is to be had at the excellent *Mooslechner* restaurants in the *Rusterhof* and *Bürgerhaus*, where you should expect to pay around €45 for a three-course meal. Some of the nicest **places to eat** cheaply, and enjoy a taste of the local wine, are the various Heuriger in the Altstadt: try *Römerzeche*, at Rathausplatz 11 (closed Tues), which serves up the local fish in a lovely courtyard. A good one, with a typical vine-clad, cobbled courtyard, is *Kicker*, on Haydngasse (March–Oct; closed Mon). The atmospheric cellars of the *Rathauskeller* (closed Wed), underneath the Rathaus, are also a pleasant place to while away the evening.

St Margarethen, Oslip and Schützen

A handful of very disparate attractions lie immediately to the west of Rust. First off, a kilometre or so west of Rust on the road to **ST MARGARETHEN**, is the unbelievably tacky **Märchenpark and Zoo** (March–Oct daily 9am–6pm; ⓦwww.maerchenpark-neusiedlersee.at; €12). Along with the wild goats, deer and the like, there are rides of all kinds, from waterboat slides and ferris wheels to a ghost maze and crazy mirrors, primarily aimed at under 10s.

Another kilometre further along the road is the **Römersteinbruch** (April–Oct daily 9am–6pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 10am–4pm; ⓦwww.roemersteinbruch.at; €2), a vast limestone quarry, whose stone was used to build the Roman town of Carnuntum (see p.196), and Vienna's Stephansdom. Nowadays, it's used primarily as a venue for an annual summer symposium of sculptors, and for an annual festival of open-air opera (ⓦwww.ofs.at). There's a tacky gift shop and a small exhibition of fossils, finds and sculptures from the quarry and a café.

A few kilometres to the north of St Margarethen, just beyond the Croatian-speaking village of **OSLIP**, lies the enormously popular **Cselley-Mühle** (ⓣ02684/2209, ⓦwww.cselley-muehle.at; Fri & Sat only; ❷), a lovely old complex of farm buildings with a dovecote, and basic rooms. Serious gigs –

mostly ambient, techno and hip-hop – take place here, accompanied by copious drinking. For a quieter venue head for the *Storchmühle* (☎02684/2127, ⓦwww.storchenmuehle.at) in Oslip itself, an attractive restaurant with a courtyard and terrace, famed for its Croatian and Hungarian specialities, and its live music in summer.

One of Austria's finest and most expensive restaurants, *Taubenkobel* (☎02684/2297, ⓦwww.taubenkobel.at; Wed–Sun; 8), can be found a couple of kilometres north of Oslip in the village of **SCHÜTZEN**. Using fresh local ingredients, the Eselböcks serve up the best dishes in Burgenland which you can sample in the restaurant's beautiful garden; you can even stay the night in one of the stylish attic rooms and indulge in the scrumptious breakfast.

Mörbisch am See

MÖRBISCH AM SEE (Fertömeggyes), 5km south of Rust, is a classic one-street village, its whitewashed houses strung out like a ribbon along Hauptstrasse. Off the main street, beautifully scented, cobbled courtyards, filled with potted plants and hung with vines and dried corn cobs, lead down to back lanes on the edge of the vineyards that press in on the village from all sides. You can visit one of these traditional houses (and its wine cellars) by following the signs to the **Heimathaus** (Easter–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 1–6pm; €1.50), at Hauptstr 53; to get the key (and a guided tour in German), you must call in at the house across the courtyard.

Mörbisch is best known for its **Seefestspiele**, the annual open-air operetta festival that takes place at the **Seebühne**, or floating stage, 2km east of centre (ⓦwww.seefestspielemoerbisch.at). Sharing the lakeside with the Seebühne are all the usual waterfront facilities, including an especially good children's swimming pool. Cyclists and pedestrians can **cross into Hungary** at Mörbisch (daily: April, May & Oct 8am–8pm; June–Sept 6am–10pm), but car drivers must use the 24-hour border crossing at Klingenbach, more than 20km away by road. Mörbisch **tourist office**, Hauptstr 23 (April–June, Sept & Oct Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–noon; July & Aug daily 9am–noon & 1–6pm; ☎02685/8430, ⓦwww.moerbischamsee.at), can assist with the bewildering array of **accommodation** on offer, including private rooms; it also has a free phone and vacancy information board. If you fancy being near the See, try the vast *Mörbischer Hof*, on Seestrasse (☎02685/8011, ⓦwww.moerbischerhof.at; 5), which has rooms facing the See, and its own swimming area in an adjacent inlet, or for something a bit more modest, try *Pension Sonnenhof* (☎02685/60973; 4), at Nussau 18, off the Hauptstrasse. The *Gemeindegasthaus*, Hauptstr 22, opposite the tourist office, serves good local **food**, with a pleasant *Gastgarten* out the back, and there are numerous other *Buschenschänken* to choose from.

Purbach am See

PURBACH AM SEE (Feketeváros), the most appealing of the villages to the north of Rust, also has the advantage of a **train station** and frequent **bus** services to Eisenstadt and Neusiedler See. The town's emblem is a stone statue of a bearded, turbaned Turk, known as the **Purbacher Türke**, to be found on the town's northern battlements (you'll need to ask a local for directions). It's by no means the only reminder of the Turkish threat: the double gateway of the **Türkentor** now protects the village from the main road, while two Turkish cannonballs can be seen within a glass-fronted niche (inscribed with the ironic warning "Türkennot") set into the wall of the picturesque old inn, *Purbachhof*, on Schulgasse.

The town's **tourist office** (May–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–noon & 3–6pm; Oct–April Mon–Fri 9am–noon; ⓣ02683/5920, ⓦwww.purbach.at) is at Hauptgasse 38. You can enjoy a comfortable night's **accommodation** at the atmospheric *Purbachhof* (ⓣ02683/5564; Easter–Oct; ❹), or in *Kloster am Spitz* (ⓣ02683/5519, ⓦwww.klosteramspitz.at; mid-March to mid-Dec; ❻), a tastefully converted monastery set amidst its own vineyards above the village, a kilometre or so to the west, with a great restaurant, and wonderful views over to the See. At Purbach's outlet to the See, 4km southeast through the reeds, there's a **campsite** *Storchencamp Purbach* (ⓣ02683/5170, ⓦwww.gmeiner.co.at; April–Oct), with a **hostel** attached, as well as all the usual leisure facilities. The village's numerous *Buschenschänken* offer the best **food and drink** options, with *Turkenkeller*, Schulgasse 9, a good option (Thurs–Sun only).

Neusiedl am See

NEUSIEDL AM SEE (Nezsider), the tacky, one-street town at the northern tip of the lake, is the only place with a frequent train service to and from Vienna; it's also a good place to get your bearings and pick up some information about the area – otherwise, its attractions are distinctly limited. Neusiedl's **tourist office** (May & June Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–5pm; July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 10am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 3–6pm; Sept–April Mon–Thurs 8am–noon & 1–4.30pm, Fri 8am–1pm; ⓣ02167/2229, ⓦwww.neusiedlamsee.at) is conveniently located in the Rathaus on the main street. **Trains** from Vienna, and most buses, arrive at the main train station, some 2km northwest of the town centre (your train ticket covers the bus into town); the Bad Neusiedl am See station, three blocks south of the main street, is served only by trains to Frauenkirchen and Pamhagen.

If you need to grab a bite to **eat**, or **stay** the night, the *Rathausstüberl* (ⓣ02167/2883, ⓦwww.rathausstueberl.at; ❺), situated directly behind the Rathaus, is a convenient choice: it serves up a fresh fish of the day, has a shady, vine-covered courtyard and clean en-suite rooms. An alternative is the family-run *Hotel Leiner*, Seestr 15 (ⓣ02167/2489; restaurant closed Mon; ❹), which is quiet, but near enough to the centre. Neusiedl also has a modern **HI hostel**, the *Junges Hotel* (ⓣ02167/2252; March–Nov), fifteen minutes' walk from the station and the centre, at Herberggasse 1, off Wienerstrasse. For gourmet cooking, you need to head out to the stylish restaurant *Zur blauen Gans* (ⓣ02167/7510, ⓦwww.blaue-gans.at; closed Tues & Wed) on Am Seepark in

The Neusiedlerseebahn

The single-track railway to the east of the lake, known as the **Neusiedlerseebahn** (ⓦwww.gysev.hu), runs from Neusiedl am See to the Hungarian village of Fertőszentmiklós, and is a subsidiary of the Raab-Ödenburg-Ebenfurther Eisenbahn (RoeEE or GYSEV), established in the 1870s. The company is also known as the Raaberbahn as it also runs trains from Ebenfurth in Austria to the Hungarian city of Győr (Raab). This private line, whose trains sport a smart green and yellow livery, miraculously survived both the redrawing of the borders after World War I and the imposition of the Iron Curtain in 1945. The engines only changed over from steam to diesel in 1980, and the line was only electrified in 1986. It continues to be 61 percent owned by the Hungarian state, 33 percent owned by the Austrian state, and 6 percent owned by small shareholders, primarily the Port of Hamburg. Rail passes are valid, and the ticketing is fully integrated into the Austrian and Hungarian state-run railway systems.

the neighbouring village of Weiden, 1km to the east; the restaurant has a garden overlooking the marina and serves up delicious Alsatian food.

Podersdorf am See

PODERSDORF (Pátfalu), 12km south of Neusiedl, is the only town that can really claim to be "am See". Don't come here expecting the charms of Rust, however; Podersdorf is basically a convenient and serviceable place with a pebbly beach, allowing easy, reed-free access to the water. It also happens to be the most popular destination in the whole of Burgenland, and the best spot from which to watch the sun set over the See. Swimming, boating, sailing, windsurfing, horse-riding and bird-watching are the main attractions, though the village does boast a **Windmühle** (July & Aug daily 6–7pm; €2), on the southern edge of town, off the road to Illmitz.

Podersdorf has two **tourist offices**: the main one is on the main street at Hauptstr 2 (July & Aug Mon–Sat 8am–noon & 1–6pm, Sun 8am–noon; Sept–June Mon–Thurs 8am–noon & 1–4pm, Fri 8am–noon; ☎02177/2227, ⓦwww.podersdorfamsee.at); the summer-only office (July & Aug, times as above; ☎02177/3400-20) is by the See, next door to the *Tauber* restaurant. Either office can book **private rooms**, and the main one has a computer screen outside showing the current state of room vacancies. In the especially busy months of July and August, you're best off getting the tourist office to book **hotel** accommodation for you, as vacancies can be thin on the ground.

Most places are fairly simple, modern and functional, though some have pleasant inner courtyards and balconies: one such B&B is *Pension Steiner*, Seestr 33 (☎02177/2790, ⓦwww.steinergg.at; ④), which doubles as a Heuriger. If you want a room overlooking the See, book in at the *Seewirt* and its adjacent annexe, *Haus Attila*, on Strandplatz (☎02177/2415, ⓦwww.seewirtkarner.at; ⑤). Podersdorf's **campsite** (☎02177/2279; April–Oct) is a vast, efficiently run site spread out along the shore to the southwest and there's **hostel** accommodation at *Georgshof* (☎02177/2764; May–Sept), a large ochre-coloured complex 1km southwest of the village set back slightly from the yacht club, beyond the campsite.

Undoubtedly one of the best places **to eat** out is *Dankbarkeit*, Hauptstr 39 (ⓦwww.dankbarkeit.at; April–Nov Mon, Tues & Fri–Sun), which serves excellent Austrian and Jewish dishes in its garden and is a real favourite with the locals. Seasonal fish, especially carp, zander and eel, feature strongly on the menu, served "in the pan" at *Pfandlwirt* (hence the name), by the campsite, and served *gebacken* (in batter), *Serbisch* (spicy) or *blau* (natural) at *Gasthof Kummer*, near the seasonal tourist office. The cheapest and most convivial places to spend the evening, though, are the town's numerous Heurigen: try the *Heuriger zum 18er*, Seestr 40 (late April to late Oct), a typical wine tavern with check tablecloths and a vine-strewn courtyard, or the one at Winklergasse 30, run by the same folk who own *Dankbarkeit* (Mon, Tues & Fri–Sun).

Frauenkirchen and Halbturn

If you're looking for a bit of cultural distraction around Podersdorf, pay a visit to the outstandingly beautiful **Basilika** in **FRAUENKIRCHEN** (Boldogasszony), 8km to the east. Built in the fourteenth century, and subsequently destroyed by the Turks on several occasions, the pilgrimage church was redesigned in High-Baroque style in 1702 by Francesco Martielli with Esterházy money. Inside, it's the cross-vaulted ceiling that makes the greatest initial impression, its frescoes framed by rich white and gold stucco-work.

Birds in the Seewinkel and the Bridge at Andau

The abundance of birdlife around Neusiedler See makes it one of the best birding destinations in central Europe. Even if you don't own a pair of binoculars, you're unlikely to miss the **white storks** which nest in just about every village around the lake, and the **great white egrets** which potter around the vineyards. Marsh harriers are pretty easy to spot flying over the reedbeds and, with a pair of binoculars, you should have no problem spotting avocets, **spoonbills** and grebes of various descriptions around the **Lange Lacke**, 4km east of Illmitz. If you've come to Seewinkel in search of the elusive **great bustard**, Europe's heaviest bird, you need to head for the village of Tadten, 8km southeast of St Andrä, and follow the signs towards the Einser Canal, to the watchtower where, with a telescope (and a lot of luck), you might catch a glimpse of one; at the very least, you're very likely to see a raptor or two.

It was across these swampy lands right by the Hungarian border, in November 1956, that thousands of Hungarians fled to the West over the **Bridge at Andau** (Brücke von Andau), later recorded in a book of the same name by James Michener. The road that leads from the bridge, in the very easternmost tip of Austrian territory, to Andau village is now lined with bizarre, slightly chilling sculptures commemorating the events of 1956 and the former presence of the Iron Curtain.

The richly carved pulpit, crowded out with polychrome angels and cherubs of varying sizes, also features an almost comical, disembodied gilded arm bursting out of the side and brandishing a crucifix. If you're hungry, drop into the *Altes Brauhaus* (Ⓦwww.altesbrauhaus.at; closed Jan & Feb), on the other side of Kirchenplatz, which offers good regional specialities and has a lovely shady garden surrounded by arcades, out the back.

The pretty, pale-blue Baroque **Schloss** (late April to late Oct Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €8; Ⓦwww.schlosshalbturn.com) in **HALBTURN** (Féltorony), 5km northeast of Frauenkirchen, provides another welcome distraction. Designed in 1710 by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt as a palatial hunting lodge for the Harrach family, and boasting a fresco by Franz Anton Maultbertsch, it now hosts temporary art exhibitions and classical concerts. The chateau's formal gardens are perfect for a picnic, and there's a *Schlosstaverne* for those without provisions.

The Seewinkel

Podersdorf is also a good base for exploring the nearby **Seewinkel**, the marshy grasslands to the south, dotted with tiny, saltwater lakes, which provide a haven for a wide variety of flora and fauna. Much of the area has been granted protected national park status, and there's a solar-powered **Nationalparkhaus** (April–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 8am–4pm; Ⓣ02175/3442, Ⓦwww.nationalpark-neusiedlersee.org), just outside **ILLMITZ** (Illmic), 11km south of Podersdorf. Here, you can buy expensive binoculars, cheap local apple juice and head up the viewing tower to try and spot one of the estimated 250 different species of bird that pass through the marshlands (see above). Exhibitions, videos and talks are held in the centre, and, though most information is in German, there are folk who speak English on hand to advise on where to go and what to see. If you prefer, you can sign up for one of the centre's organized excursions, which cost €9 per person and usually last around three hours.

Note that there's a small entrance charge to each of the nearby inland lakes in the summer season. **Zicksee**, a soda lake to the northeast, is deeper than most of

the other lakes, and, consequently, a popular place to swim, and yet still manages to be home to bitterns and black-necked grebes. The grassy beach on the eastern shore is more sheltered, much shadier and generally a lot more laid-back than the one at Podersdorf. The lake is a short walk from the nearby **train station** at St Andrä am Zicksee, and has a **campsite** (☎02175/2144; April–Sept).

South Burgenland

Burgenland is very nearly split in two by the Sopron salient given to Hungary in 1922 (see box, p.247). At the region's "waist" there's barely 5km of Burgenland between the Hungarian border and Lower Austria. Add to this the thickly forested Rosaliengebirge and Ödenburgergebirge that form a continuous arc of hills from Sopron to Wiener Neustadt, and **South Burgenland** starts to feel like a separate province. While Eisenstadt and Neusiedler See appear to be teetering on the edge of the Hungarian *puszta*, southern Burgenland is a patchwork of gently rolling hills, forests, vineyards and rich farmland. There are very few places here that you'd go out of your way to visit, but if you're heading south to Slovenia or Styria the road that winds its way down the length of Burgenland is a pretty enough route to take. **Raiding**, the birthplace of Franz Liszt, receives a trickle of pilgrims, while **Lockenhaus**, hard by the Hungarian border, hosts a world-famous festival of chamber music. The museum in **Bernstein** dedicated to serpentine is of more general interest, as is the landmark castle at **Güssing**, in the far south of the province.

Raiding

The Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811–86) was born in the village of **RAIDING** (Doborján), some 40km south of Eisenstadt, where his father was steward of the Meier estate. The family home, now the **Liszt Geburtshaus** (Palm Sunday to Oct daily 9am–noon & 1–5pm; ⓦwww.lisztverein.at; €3.50), like the Meier estate itself, belonged to the Esterházy family. Over the entrance to the lovely sixteenth-century whitewashed cottage, set in its own beautiful walled garden, is an old Hungarian inscription commemorating Liszt Ferenc, unveiled in the composer's presence, and a more recent one in German. Liszt spent the first eleven years of his life here, before the family moved to Vienna (where he studied under Czerny and Salieri), and eventually to Paris, to further the Wunderkind's promising musical career. To the strains of his *Piano Concerto No. 1*, you get to see a lot of photographs of the wild-looking Liszt, who spent much of his life as a roaming virtuoso. Concerts are regularly held here in the brand new white boxy adjacent 600-seat **Konzerthaus**, and in October there's an annual **Liszt Festival**.

Buses to Raiding are pretty infrequent, but the nearest **train station**, Raiding-Lackendorf, is only 2km north of the village; alternatively, you could hire a bike from the station at Deutschkreutz, 10km northeast of Raiding.

Lockenhaus and around

LOCKENHAUS (Léka), at the foot of the Günsergebirge, 25km southwest of Raiding, is as good a place as any to stop off if you're passing this way. The town's focal point is its gargantuan Baroque **Pfarrkirche**, overlooking the main square, whose interior features a wild, technicolour high relief of winged cherubs clinging to giant acanthus leaves on the north wall of the nave and, on

the opposite wall, a gruesome, full-scale Crucifixion scene, played out against a mural of Jerusalem. Check out the church's crypt, too, which contains several ornate red marble tombs belonging to the local Hungarian bigwigs, the Nádasdy family.

The medieval fortress of **Burg Lockenhaus** (daily: April–Nov 8am–5pm; Dec–March 8am–4pm; Ⓦwww.ritterburg.at; €5), which rises up out of the woods high above the town, is Burgenland's oldest, built around 1200 to defend the region against the Mongols. One wing has been converted into a hotel (see below), including the high-vaulted **Rittersaal**, formerly used for mass eating and drinking. It has two courtyards, the lower one having a pleasant *Burgtaverne* (Ⓦwww.burgtaverne-lockenhaus.at). Amid the hotchpotch of rooms on the first floor, the most intriguing is the douple-apsed **Kultraum** in the exact centre of the castle, originally entered and lit only by a hole in the ceiling; it was once used by the Knights Templar whose robed descendants still meet at the round table in the Burgherrenzimmer, off the upper courtyard. The castle also boasts a gruesome torture chamber with the original instruments and handy directions on how to use them – check out the hole in the "Iron Maiden" for the blood to run out. The Festsaal is used for concerts and forms the centrepiece of the town's world-famous **Kammermusikfest**, established by the Latvian-born violinist Gidon Kremer in 1981, and held annually in late June/early July.

The **Hungarian border** is just 2km east of Lockenhaus, and, if you want to visit the nearby Hungarian town of **Köszeg** (Güns), which can justifiably claim to have the prettiest town centre in Hungary, there's a border crossing 8km further east at Rattersburg. If you just want to look over into Hungary, you could enjoy a full day's hike along the marked path to **Geschriebenstein** (884m), 10km south of Lockenhaus, the highest peak in the Günsergebirge, with a lookout tower from which there are glorious views over the *puszta*.

Lockenhaus has a good **tourist office** (April–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–4.30pm; Ⓣ02616/2247, Ⓦwww.lockenhaus.at), at Hauptstr 21, with a smattering of private rooms to offer. The most memorable **place to stay** is, of course, in the *Burghotel Lockenhaus* (Ⓣ02616/2394, Ⓕ2766; ❻), though make sure you get one of the atmospheric medieval rooms, and not one in the modern annexe (❹). If the Burg is full, or your budget's not up to it, *Gasthof Schlögl* (Ⓣ02616/2225; ❸), on Hauptplatz, is a good fall-back.

Bernstein and around

BERNSTEIN (Borostyánkö), 15km west of Lockenhaus, means "amber" in German, and most likely got its name from the ancient "Amber Road" that linked the Baltic to the Adriatic, and passed through the town. Confusingly, the gemstone for which Bernstein is best known, however, and the subject of the town's **Felsenmuseum** (March–June & Aug–Dec daily 9am–noon & 1.30–5pm; July 9am–6pm; €5; Ⓦwww.felsenmuseum.at), is **serpentine**, which was first commercially mined here in the mid-nineteenth century. Despite the lack of information in English, this is an intriguing museum, decked out like a dimly lit mineshaft, and glistening with all sorts of startling crystals and gemstones. Then, on the first floor, you get to see what the local serpentine, which turns spinach-green when polished, can be made into at the hands of Otto Potsch, the sculptor who set up the museum. Potsch's slightly kitsch carved animals might not be everyone's cup of tea, but the craftsmanship is first class.

The best place to stay in Bernstein is the medieval *Burg Bernstein* (Ⓣ03354/6382, Ⓦwww.burgbernstein.at; ❾; May–Oct), which sits above the village, and which was the birthplace of Laszlo Almásy (of "English Patient" fame). This family-owned castle is the real thing, a wonderfully rambling place,

complete with dungeon, ghosts and a candlelit dining hall (around €30 a head), with an Italian stucco-work ceiling; rooms have real fires, lots of antiques and few mod cons. Most of the rooms cost €150 and above, but the budget *Jäger* double room goes for just €76.

Most people go to the walled town of **STADTSCHLAINING** (Városszalónak), 12km south of Bernstein, to attend the UNESCO-funded Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict-Resolution (Ⓦ www.aspr.ac.at), which resides in the town's little medieval **Burg Schlaining**. The public can also visit the castle on an hour-long guided tour (Easter–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 1–6pm; €7.30), which allows you into the temporary exhibition, the European Museum for Freedom, takes you up the castle tower and past a bit of folk art and the odd leftover from the days of the Batthyány family, who sold it off to a local railway magnate in 1849. After the tour, you can eat, drink and relax in the dry moat, now part of the castle's *Burgtaverne*, and if all the rooms in the castle aren't taken up with some conference, you can even stay here (Ⓣ 03355/220131, Ⓦ www.aspr.ac.at; 5). Note, too, that the castle hosts **Klangfrühling** (Ⓦ www.klangfruehling.com), an international chamber music festival in the middle of May. Stadtschlaining does have one other, even more intriguing, sight: the **Friedensbibliothek** (Mon & Thurs 9am–12.30pm & 1–7pm, Tues, Wed & Fri 9am–12.30pm & 1–5pm; free), housed in the town's former synagogue, across the Hauptplatz from the Burg through an archway at no. 3. The building has been lovingly restored, and its barrel-vaulted ceiling is richly decorated with trompe l'oeil plasterwork, so settle down with a book (there are plenty in English) and take some time out.

Some 10km south of Bernstein, the main road bypasses the smart spa town of **BAD TATZMANNSDORF** (Tarcsafürdö). Other than to take the waters, there are two main reasons you might want to pause here: to have a swim in the lovely open-air pool, on Josef-Holzel-Allee, off Bahnhofstrasse, or to visit the neighbouring **Südburgenländisches Freilichtmuseum** (daily 9am–5pm; €2). Neatly laid out in an orchard, with a few sheep, hens and goats for added authenticity, this laid-back open-air folk museum holds around fifteen, mostly thatched buildings that were commonplace in the nineteenth century. If your appetite is whetted, there's an even better selection of folk buildings near Güssing (see below).

Güssing and around

At the very foot of Burgenland (though not quite the toe), more than 50km south of Bad Tatzmannsdorf, the little town of **GÜSSING** (Németújvár) lies wrapped round the base of a medieval castle – a striking sight as you approach from the north. The rambling interior of **Burg Güssing** (Easter–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–5pm; Ⓦ www.burgguessing.info; €6) contains a half-decent art collection, including one or two gems by Dürer and Cranach, plus an array of Turkish and Hungarian arms and armour; it also hosts special exhibitions, stages open-air events in its main courtyard, and has an inexpensive *Burgtaverne* with great views over the surrounding countryside. In summer, you can reach the castle via a state-of-the-art funicular (€2). It's also worth peeking inside the **Franziskaner-kirche**, on the town's Hauptplatz; the interior is filled with gilded Baroque altarpieces, but the church's fame rests on its **Batthyánysche Gruft**, the Batthyány family mausoleum, set into the exterior south wall of the church. Access to the ornate, eighteenth-century lead sarcophagus, by the eminent sculptor Balthasar Ferdinand Moll, has to be arranged through the priest.

Güssing **tourist office** (Mon–Thurs & Sat 9am–noon, Fri 9am–noon & 3–6pm; Ⓣ 03322/42311-23, Ⓦ www.gussing.at) is at Hauptplatz 7, and can book private rooms for you. Other **accommodation** is limited: try *Landgasthof*

Kedl, 3km north of Güssing, in Urbersdorf (Ⓣ03322/42403; ❸). If you want something **to eat** or are just breaking your journey in Güssing, the *Stadt Café* is a stylish Kaffeehaus on the main street, and you can get full Austrian cuisine and pizzas at the *Gasthof zur Burg*, further down the street on Marktplatz (Ⓦwww.gasthaus-zur-burg.com). Alternatively, you could continue 10km south to Heiligenkreuz, where the warmly welcoming *Gasthof Gibiser* (Ⓣ03325/4216, Ⓔg.gibiser@aon.at; ❹) offers excellent food, and accommodation in lovely thatched buildings in the grounds.

Gerersdorf and Naturpark Güssing

It's only a six-kilometre drive from Güssing through the cornfields and vineyards to the privately run **Freilichtmuseum** (April–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm; Ⓦwww.freilichtmuseum-gerersdorf.at; €4.50), in the village of **GERERSDORF** (Németszentgrot), to the northwest. This is an excellent open-air folk museum, where around twenty, mostly thatched farm buildings – from beehives and dovecotes to fruit presses and pigsties – have been reassembled.

Five kilometres to the northeast of Güssing, a large section of forest has been turned into a sort of open-air zoo – what the Austrians like to call a *Wildpark* – for rare and endangered species. Wild horses, red deer, water buffalo, European bison and several other unusual types of cattle have considerable space in which to roam, and can be easily spotted from the park's network of paths. The best time to see the animals at the **Naturpark Güssing** (free) is towards dusk, when they come out to feed. To reach the park, you'll need your own car: take the road east to Urbersdorf, and skirt Stausee to the north.

Travel details

Trains

Eisenstadt to: Neusiedl am See (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun 8–10 daily; 35min); Purbach am See (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun 8–10 daily; 20min); Vienna Meidling (Mon–Fri hourly; 1hr 10min).

Neusiedl am See to: Bruck an der Leitha (Mon–Sat hourly, Sun every 2hr; 10min); Frauenkirchen (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun every 2hr; 25min); Pamhagen (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun every 2hr; 40min); Purbach am See (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun 8–10 daily; 15min); St Andrä am Zicksee (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun every 2hr; 30min); Vienna Südbahnhof (Mon–Fri hourly, Sat & Sun every 2hr; 50min).

Buses

Bernstein to: Bad Tatzmannsdorf (Mon–Fri 3–5 daily; 15min).

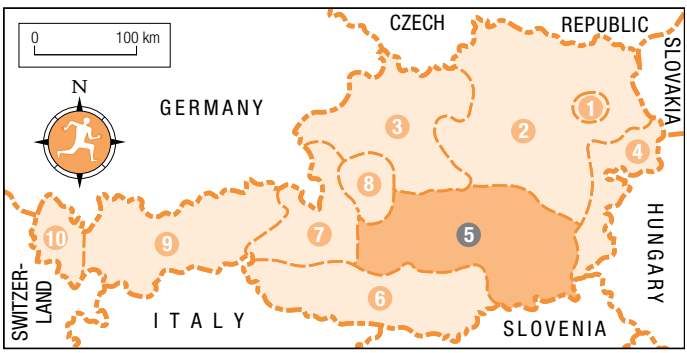
Eisenstadt to: Forchtenstein (3–4 daily; 30min); Mörbisch (Mon–Sat every 1–2hr, Sun 6 daily; 40min); Rust (Mon–Sat every 1–2hr, Sun 6 daily; 1hr); Vienna (8 daily; 1hr 10min).

Neusiedl am See to: Andau (Mon–Sat every 1–2hr, Sun 4 daily; 55min); Halbturn (Mon–Sat every 1–2hr, Sun 4 daily; 30min); Illmitz (Mon–Sat every 1–2hr, Sun 6 daily; 30min); Podersdorf am See (Mon–Fri every 1–2hr, Sat & Sun 4 daily; 25min); Tadten (Mon–Sat every 1–2hr, Sun 4 daily; 45min).

Rust to: Vienna (7 daily; 2hr).

5

Styria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CHAPTER 5

Highlights

- **Zeughaus, Graz** A beguiling one-of-a-kind armoury, with an impressive range of aged weapons and armour. See p.276
- **Austrian Open-Air Museum, Stübing** This well-executed museum delivers a good overview of Austria's rural heritage. See p.284
- **Pfarrkirche St Barbara, Bärnbach** The locals voted for Hundertwasser to let rip on this parish church with predictably zany and attractive results. See p.285
- **Pumpkinseed oil** Be sure to try dishes laced with this full autumnal flavour from the pumpkins of southern Styria See p.287
- **Wine tours** Roam the traditional southern Styrian borderlands tasting excellent and rare fine wines, in the rustic Buschenschanken – simple seasonal rural bars. See p.288
- **Schloss Reigersburg** The finest castle in the Land; still in use and with a magnificent hilltop setting. See p.289
- **Admont** Styria's most rewarding abbey, with an interesting museum and a fabulous baroque library. See p.304
- **The Upper Ennstal** See Styria at its most picturesque, with towns like Schladming making great alpine bases for both skiing and hiking. See p.307

▲ Pfarrkirche Bärnbach

5

Styria

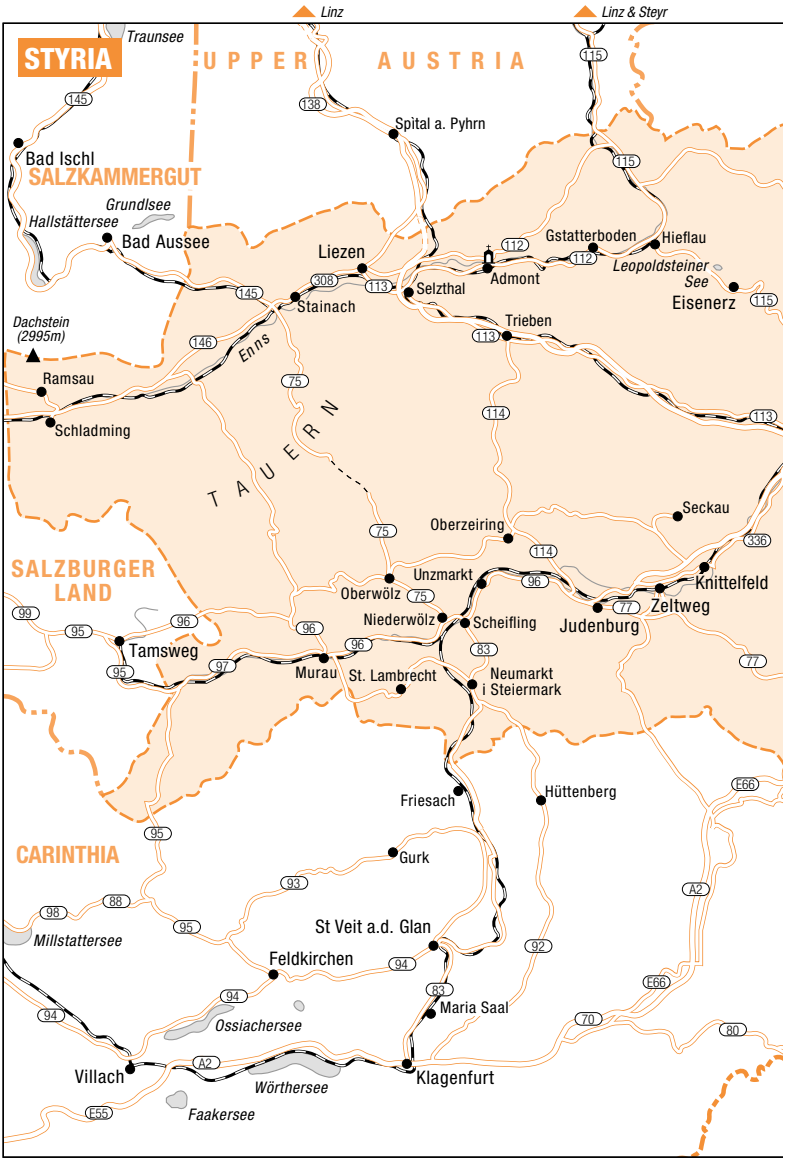
Styria (*Steiermark* ⓦwww.steiermark.com) is one of Austria's largest *Länder*, and also one of the most varied in terms of terrain. A gently undulating landscape to the south, rich in vineyards, orchards and fertile, arable land, gives way to the industrialized ribbon of the middle **Murtal** further north. Beyond here, in the increasingly alpine west and far north, imposing mountain ranges like the **Tauern** and the **Hochswab** preserve their laid-back, rural atmosphere.

Styria was historically the **industrial** powerhouse of the nation, with the rich iron-ore deposits of the **Erzberg** fuelling the iron and steel workshops of the Murtal. During the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century heyday of Habsburg expansion, this iron-based industrial might ensured a constant supply of weaponry to armies engaged in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. The provincial capital, **Graz**, became the key military stronghold in a line of defences that kept the Turks out of central Europe, and for a while it rivalled Vienna, Innsbruck and Prague as a centre of political, cultural and religious influence.

Still the main target for most visitors to the province, Graz is one of Austria's most promising urban centres, an elegant and prosperous city with a rich choice of cultural diversions and a buzzing nightlife. It's also an ideal base for exploring the relatively little-visited region of **southern Styria**, whose agricultural villages and rural market towns have little in common with the alpine Austria of the tourist brochures. Wine-producing communities are scattered throughout the region, most notably in the villages towards the Slovene border, while apple growing sustains the settlements northeast of Graz. Undisputed king of the south Styrian farming scene, however, is the pumpkin, whose seeds are milled to produce the province's most characteristic culinary product, **pumpkin oil** (*Kürbisöl*). This dark, nutty-flavoured liquid, not unlike sesame oil, is as ubiquitous as salt and pepper in the region's restaurants.

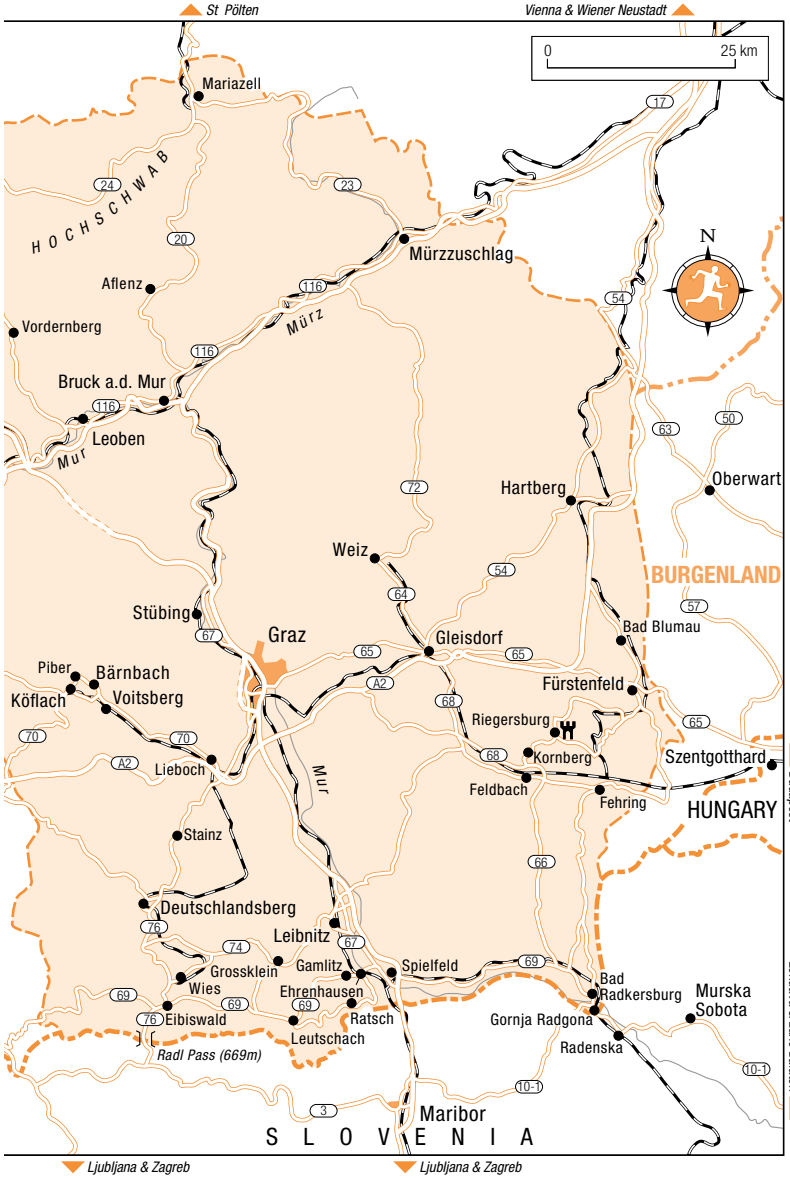
Many of the south's outlying attractions can be reached on day-trips from the Styrian capital. The main southbound road and rail route to Slovenia passes by the historic town of **Leibnitz** and the nearby wine village of **Ehrenhausen**, home to the extraordinary **Eggenberg Mausoleum**. The main attraction in the rolling farmland due east of Graz is **Schloss Riegersburg**, Styria's most impressive medieval fortress.

Northern Styria is really a tale of two regions: the **Murtal**, where gruff but enjoyable towns like Leoben and Judenburg proclaim the area's industrial heritage, and the much more appetizing mountain regions that lie to the north and west. Important transport hubs, **Bruck an der Mur** and **Leoben**, are good starting points for trips into the valleys fringing the Hochschwab Mountains, where the pilgrimage centre of **Mariazell** and the mysterious, pine-shrouded



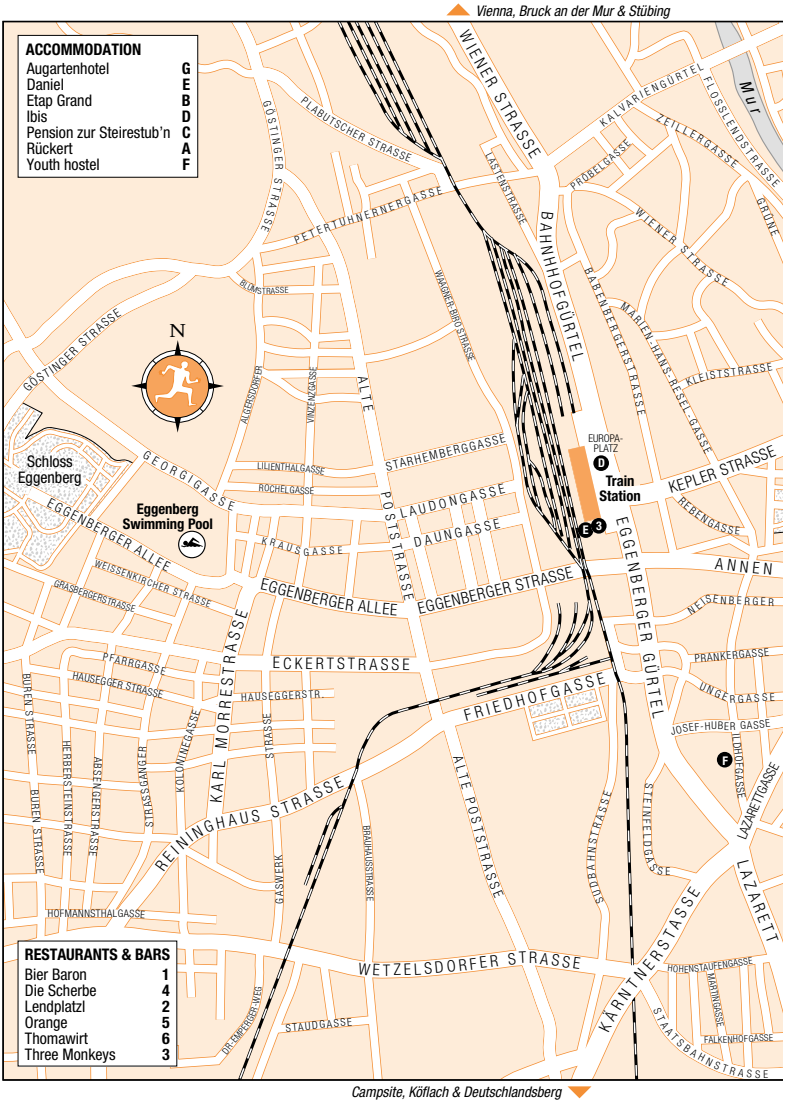
mining town of **Eisenerz** are main points of interest. Further west, the hilltop town of **Judenburg** is worth a quick visit, before pressing on to relatively isolated medieval settlements like **Oberzeiring**, **Oberwölz** and Murau.

Travelling by road or rail from Graz towards Salzburg, Linz and the north, you'll pass through the **Enns Valley** in Styria's northwestern corner, worth visiting for its alpine scenery alone – here, the Benedictine abbey at **Admont** and the region's one major winter resort, **Schladming**, are the obvious places to stop off.

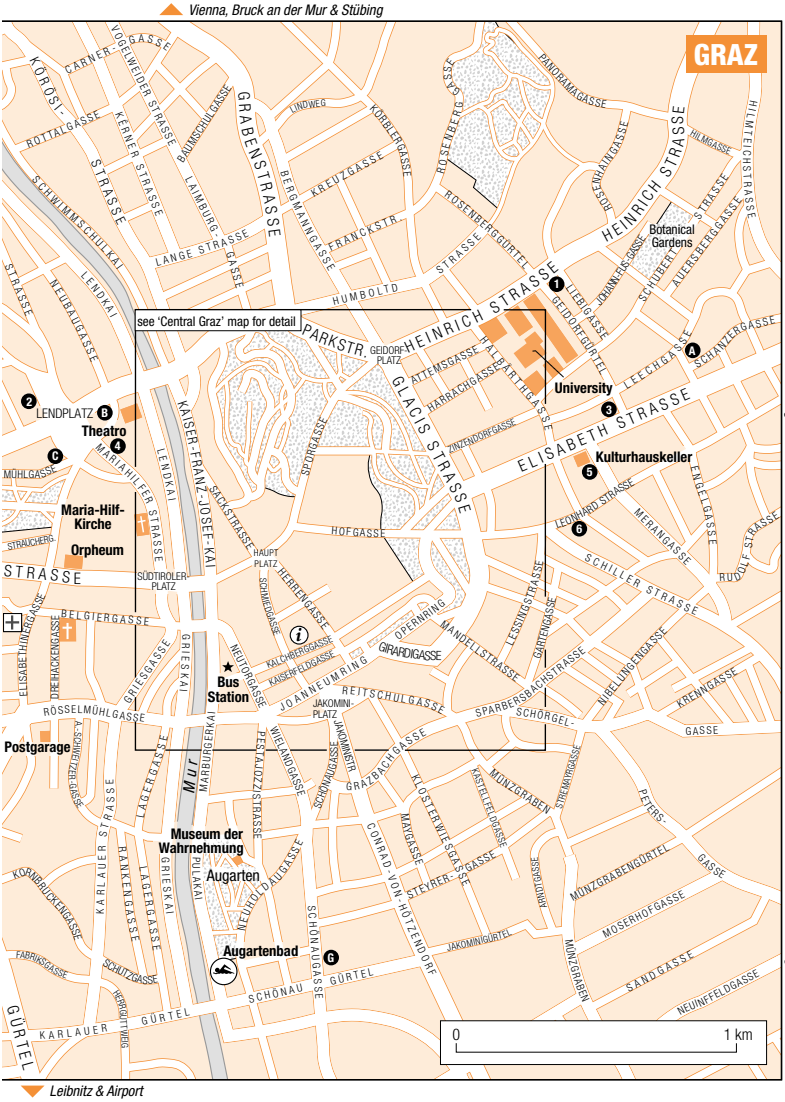


Graz

With a population of just over 250,000, **GRAZ** ranks as Austria's second city, and yet has always been overlooked by visitors en route to the more widely publicized delights of Salzburg and Innsbruck. This is partly due to the city's lack of an alpine hinterland, although the Styrian capital's geographical



situation – straddling the River Mur and surrounded by rolling hills – is undeniably attractive. Until the seventeenth century, Graz was a genuine rival to Vienna, as home to the Leopoldine line of the Habsburg family and an assemblage of aristocrats who swarmed around their court. The elegant palaces town houses and museums of Graz's UNESCO-protected centre bear testimony to the city's Baroque heyday, while a spate of cutting-edge galleries – notably the Kunsthaus Graz – point to the city's present-day role as one of central Europe's main venues for contemporary art. By way of contrast, the Austrian Open-Air Museum, 18km north near the village of Stübing, provides an excellent insight into Austria's rural traditions.



Some history

The Schlossberg hill above Graz has been fortified ever since the seventh-century arrival of the Slovenes, who bestowed it with the name "Graz" (derived from the Slav word *gradec*, or fortress) before moving on. The town itself didn't come into its own until 1379, when Duke Leopold III, head of a junior branch of the Habsburg family, adopted Graz as his capital. The dukes of Styria subsequently based themselves here, ensuring Graz's status as a centre of imperial power – Leopold's grandson Friedrich III, crowned Holy Roman emperor in 1452, divided his time between three capitals: Graz, Wiener Neustadt and Linz.

▲ Graz Altstadt

The town gained strategic significance when it became central Europe's last line of defence against the Turks, who first ventured into Styria in 1478 and remained a near-constant threat for the next two hundred years. During this period the town benefited hugely from the influx of military architects, freebooters and warrior-aristocrats grown fat on the profits of the Turkish wars. Painters and craftsmen flocked here from northern Italy to decorate the palaces and town houses of Graz's sixteenth-century elite, and Baroque styles were adopted here a generation earlier than elsewhere in Austria.

Intellectuals, too, were drawn to Graz in the sixteenth century: as traditional Catholicism all but ebbed away in **post-Reformation Styria**, Graz became an important local centre for Protestant theologians and liberal-leaning academics – like the astronomer Johann Kepler, who taught mathematics in one of Graz's Protestant schools. The man who pulled the curtain down on Styrian Protestantism was Archduke Ferdinand (who, as Emperor Ferdinand II, was to become the principal architect of the re-Catholicized Habsburg monarchy), a fanatically pious, Jesuit-educated 18-year-old when he became governor of Styria in 1595. By expelling preachers, demolishing churches, burning books and harrying Protestant-leaning magnates, Ferdinand soon dragged Styria back into the **Catholic** fold. Lorded over by the Jesuits who had been introduced to the city by Ferdinand's father Karl, Graz was to become a major seat of Catholic learning during the seventeenth century.

On becoming emperor in 1619, Ferdinand moved his court to Vienna, and after the defeat of the Turks outside Vienna in 1683, the city on the Danube began to replace Graz as Austria's main political, cultural and commercial centre. Graz has loitered on the fringes of history ever since, although stout defence in the face of **Napoleon's armies** in 1809 endowed the place with a modicum of civic pride.

By the late nineteenth century, Graz's mild climate had made it a popular retirement choice for army officers and civil servants, and its reputation as a conservative town swarming with pensioners initially proved hard to shake off. Nowadays, however, partly due to the presence of a 37,000-strong student population, it's a rich and culturally varied city, with plenty of night-time diversions. Evidence of the town's commitment to modern culture is provided by the Kunsthaus Graz and a host of other contemporary art galleries, and the Steirische Herbst, or **Styrian Autumn**, a festival of avant-garde music, theatre, art and film, which takes place every October.

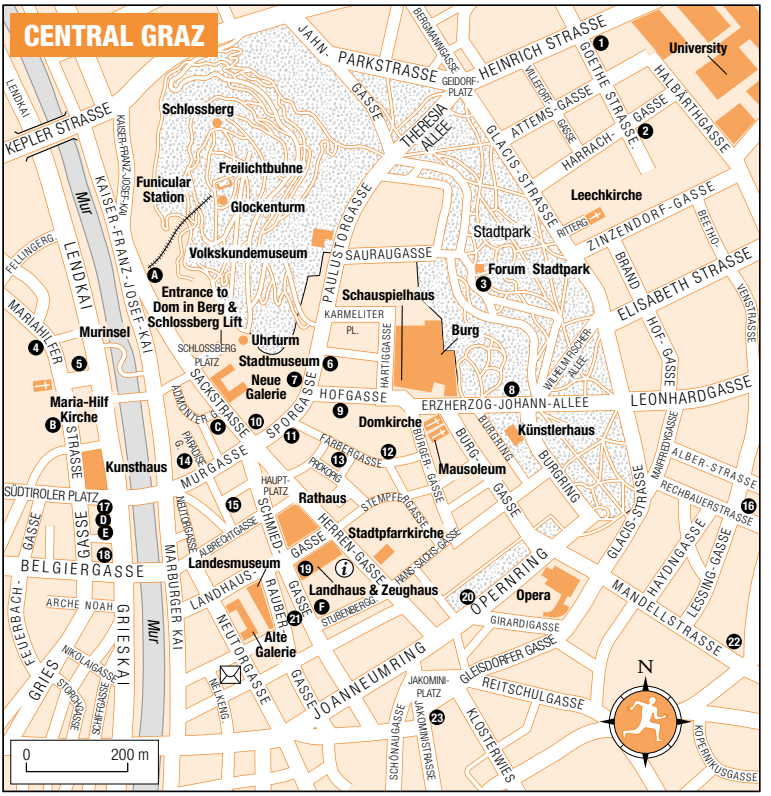
Arrival, information and transport

Graz's **train station** is on the western edge of town, a fifteen-minute walk or short tram ride (#1, #3, #6 or #7) from the central Hauptplatz. **Buses** arrive either at the train station or at the bus station at Andreas-Hofer-Platz, a couple of blocks west of the Hauptplatz. Graz **airport** is 9km south of the centre. Regular buses leave from outside the arrivals hall either to the train station or to Jakominiplatz in the city centre (6am–6pm; €1.80). Alternatively, hourly trains run to Graz train station from a halt located 800m from the airport terminal building (€1.80). A taxi doing the same trip will cost about €15.

There's a **tourist office** just southeast of the Hauptplatz at Herrengasse 16 (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–3pm, Sun 10am–3pm; ⓣ0316/80750, ⓦwww.graztourismus.at), which can provide free town plans and a wealth of brochures and advice. Graz is served by an integrated network of local **buses** and **trams**. A single ticket costs €1.80 and is valid for one hour, including any number of changes. A 24-hour ticket costs €3.70. Both are available from the tourist office, from ticket machines at the main tram stops, or from the driver.

Accommodation

Budget accommodation is hard to come by in what is a prosperous, business-oriented town, although the tourist office will book **private rooms** (❷); note that almost all of these are a lengthy bus ride from the centre. The town's **youth hostel**, four blocks south of the station at Idlhofgasse 74 (ⓣ0316/7083-50, ⓦwww.jgh.at), is a pristine modern building with four-bed dorms, natty



ACCOMMODATION		RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS & BARS							
Erzherzog Johann	C	Aiola	13	Don Camillo	15	Mangolds	18	Strehly	11
Grand Hotel Wiesler	D	Altsteirische Schmankerlstüb'n	10	Eckhaus	16	Operncafé	20	Tribeka	17
Grazerhof	F	Baltimore	5	Flann O'Brien's	14	Park House	3	Weltcafé	22
Mariahilf	B	Brot & Spiele	4	Glöcklbräu	12	Pizza Catherina Promenade	6	Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln	1
Schlossberg	A	Café El Greco	21	Hofcafé Edegger Tax	8	Stern	9		
Weitzer	E	Café Harrach	2	Landhauskeller	19	Stockwerk	23		

en-suite singles (€24–37) and doubles (2). It's an easy-going and justifiably popular place so book ahead.

The easiest of Graz's **campsites** to get to by public transport is *Camping Central*, Martinhofstr 3 (Ⓣ0316/378 5102, Ⓦwww.tiscover.com/camping central; April–Oct; bus #32 from Jakominiplatz to the Bad Strassgang stop), about 6km southwest of town.

Central Graz

The following establishments are shown on the "Central Graz" map above.

Erzherzog Johann Sackstr 3–5 Ⓣ0316/811616, Ⓦwww.erzherzog-johann.com. Atmospheric, old-fashioned city-centre hotel, with high standards of service and comfort. 8

Grand Hotel Wiesler Grieskai 4–8 Ⓣ0316/7066-0, Ⓦwww.hotelwiesler.com. Just across the river from the Hauptplatz, this is one of Graz's best hotels, boasting spacious

rooms with plenty of desk space and attention-to-detail staff. Still preserves some of its fin-de-siècle fittings, including the Art Nouveau ceramic relief of Venus in the breakfast room. Doubles from €150. 9

Grazerhof Stubenberggasse 10 ⓣ0316/824358, ⓦwww.grazerhof.at. Good mid-range choice in the heart of town, although some of the rooms are on the poky side. Doubles with sink only 4, en-suite doubles 6.

Mariahilf Mariahilferstr 9 ⓣ0316/713163. Cosy old hotel just across the river from the centre, with a range of widely differing rooms. Those without en-suite facilities can seem a bit threadbare; others are quite roomy and atmospheric. 4–6

Schlossberg Kaiser Franz Josef Kai 30 ⓣ0316/8070-0, ⓦwww.schlossberg-hotel.at. Bastion of luxury at the foot of Schlossberg hill, a few steps north of the city centre. Sumptuous rooms have antique furnishings and there's a rooftop pool too. 9

Weitzer Grieskai 12–16 ⓣ0316/703-0, ⓦwww.weitzer.com. Riverside hotel just ten minutes' walk from the Hauptplatz, offering large high-ceilinged rooms with solid brown furnishings, and dependable five-star levels of service. Doubles from €160. 9

Outside the centre

The following establishments are shown on the "Graz" map on pp.270–271.

Augartenhotel Schönaugasse 53 ⓣ0316/20800, ⓦwww.augartenhotel.at. Ultra-modern glass-and-steel palace in the quiet Augarten area just south of the centre. The minimalist rooms have big bathrooms, contemporary artworks on the wall, and facilities include an indoor pool. 7

Daniel Europaplatz 1 ⓣ0316/711080, ⓦwww.hoteldaniel.com. Right next to the train station, this outwardly ungainly building that looks like a chest of drawers conceals a cool designer hotel. En-suite rooms feature crisp straight lines, lots of muted greys and browns, and free Internet access. 4

Etap Grand Zentrum Neubaugasse 11 ⓣ0316/764 400, ⓦwww.etaphotel.com. No frills budget hotel on the west bank of the river offering teeny-weeny en-suite rooms decked out in primary colours. Often booked solid by coach parties, but always worth a try. 4

Ibis Europaplatz 12 ⓣ0316/778-0, ⓦwww.ibishotel.com. Modern concrete wedge rising up out of the square in front of the train station. Good mid-range option, with en-suite facilities, a/c, satellite TV and telephone in all rooms. 6

Pension zur Steirerstub'n Lendplatz 8 ⓣ0316/716855, ⓦwww.pension-graz.at. Snug en-suite rooms with folksy touches above a traditional restaurant on the west bank of the river. Right beside an animated fruit and veg market, an easy stroll from the main sights. 5

Rückert Rückertgasse 4 ⓣ0316/323031, ⓦwww.rueckert.at. Pension housed in a suburban villa amid quiet, leafy streets 2km east of the centre. Handy for the university district. Rooms range in style from the coolly minimalist to the cosily chintzy. Take tram #1 from the train station, Hauptplatz or Jakominiplatz to Teggethofplatz, then walk down Hartenaugasse to Rückertgasse. Rooms with shower and WC 5, rooms with shower only 4

The City

Most of what you'll want to see in Graz is concentrated on the east side of the River Mur, where the **Hauptplatz** and the neighbouring streets of **Herrengasse**, Sporgasse and Sackstrasse provide the core of a busy downtown area. Immediately above hangs the **Schlossberg**, site of Graz's medieval fortress, while the **Stadtpark**, to the east, provides the town with an attractive promenading ground. The main public transport hubs are on the east bank of the river, too: the Hauptplatz itself, as key crossroads for various tramlines; and Jakominiplatz, 500m southeast, where tramlines and local bus routes converge. There's a lot to see on the west bank of the river, notably the avant-garde architectural landmark that is the **Kunsthaus Graz**, a brace of Baroque churches, and the art collections of **Schloss Eggenberg**, some 4km from the centre.

The Hauptplatz and Herrengasse

Everything in Graz revolves around the **Hauptplatz**, a triangular market square bordered by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century facades. It also

Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets

The **Landesmuseum Joanneum** (Ⓦ www.museum-joanneum.at) administers several of Graz's leading museum and gallery attractions, including the Zeughaus, the Museum of Natural History, the Folklore Museum, the Neue Galerie, the Künstlerhaus, the Kunsthaus Graz, and the Alte Galerie in Schloss Eggenberg. You can save a lot of money on individual entrance fees by purchasing a one-day ticket (€8) or a two-day ticket (€13), each available from the museum sites themselves.

serves as the city's biggest tram stop, alive with the bustle of shoppers and commuters most hours of the day. In the middle of the square stands a statue of Emperor Franz-Josef's uncle **Archduke Johann**, who did much to modernize Graz in the early nineteenth century, founding a Technisches Universität, sponsoring the construction of the Graz–Mürzzuschlag railway, and donating his art collection to form the basis of the Landesmuseum, which now bears his name. Despite disgracing the family by marrying a postmaster's daughter from Bad Aussee, he was one of the few nineteenth-century Habsburgs to enjoy true mass popularity (for more on him, see p.455). The statue of the Archduke is accompanied by a quartet of nymphs symbolizing Styria's main rivers, the Enns, Mur, Drau and Sann – although the latter, rising in the south Styrian mountains, was lost to Austria in 1918, and now flows through Slovenia.

At the southern end of the square, where the nineteenth-century, neo-Renaissance **Rathaus** looms, Herrengasse leads towards the **Landhaus** at no. 16, built in the 1550s to house the Styrian Diet. Designed by the military architect Domenico dell'Allio, who also worked on the fortification of the Schlossberg, it's quite an unassuming building when viewed from outside, although the Italianate arcading of the inner courtyard is one of the best examples of Renaissance architecture in Austria.

Next door to the Landhaus, the **Zeughaus**, or armoury (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm; Nov–March Mon–Sat 10am–3pm, Sun 10am–4pm; €7; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid), was built in 1642 to provide the citizenry with a readily available stock of weapons in case of Turkish attack, and is preserved very much in its original form. With over 30,000 helmets, breastplates, swords and spiky balls on sticks on show on three vast, timber-beamed floors, it's a hugely impressive display of the town's erstwhile military might. Highlights include the fancily engraved officers' breastplates on the second floor, and the full set of horse armour on the third.

A little way further along Herrengasse, a fine eighteenth-century bell tower sits atop the **Stadtpfarrkirche**, an elegant jumble of Baroque and neo-Gothic styles that's home to an *Assumption of the Virgin* attributed to Tintoretto on the right-hand side of the nave. Equally striking is the postwar stained glass by Albert Birkle behind the altar: one panel (in the window to the left) clearly portrays Hitler and Mussolini watching over the flagellation of Christ.

The only real attraction in the grid of nineteenth-century streets west of Herrengasse is the **Naturhistorisches Museum** at Raubergasse 10 (Tues–Sun 9am–4pm; €5.50; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid), a rambling collection which embraces geology, zoology and botany. The attractively mounted display of the (stuffed) fauna of Styria culminates with a stag killed by Kaiser Franz-Jozef in 1890.

The Mausoleum of Ferdinand II and the Domkirche

On the northern side of Herrengasse, Stempfergasse leads into a neighbourhood of narrow alleyways that dogleg their way up the hill towards the **Mausoleum of Ferdinand II** (daily 10am–noon & 1.30–4pm; €4.50), a dome-encrusted structure that was begun in 1614 when the intended incumbent was a healthy 36 years old. Designed by the Italian Pietro de Pomis, who spent most of his life working for a Styrian aristocracy greedy for Italian style, the mausoleum skilfully blends a variety of styles, coming over as a cross between Classical temple and Baroque church. Prominent among the statues which seem poised to topple from the pediment is a graceful figure of St Catherine, resting against the wheel on which she was tortured. Inside, Ferdinand is entombed alongside a sarcophagus intended for both his parents, Emperor Karl II and Maria of Bavaria, although only Maria is actually buried here (her husband lies in Stift Seckau, see p.298). The fine stucco work on the ceiling and some of the frescoes were added by Fischer von Erlach in the 1690s.

Next door is the **Domkirche**, or cathedral, which has preserved much of its late fifteenth-century Gothic character. It was built by Emperor Friedrich III whose coat of arms and motto, AEIOU (usually taken to stand for *Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima*, or "Austria will be last in the world", although see p.210 for other possible versions), adorn the west portal. Inside, there's a fifteenth-century Crucifixion on the right-hand side of the nave, and a sequence of elaborate Baroque side altars. Standing at the entrance to the choir are two Renaissance-era reliquary chests, each bearing ivory reliefs depicting allegories of Love, Death and Time among other moralizing subjects. The chests originally contained the dowry of Paola di Gonzaga, Duchess of Mantua, in advance of her wedding to Leonhard of Görz (a big cheese in Lienz, see p.359) in 1470.

The Burg, Sporgasse and the Steirisches Volkskundenmuseum

Immediately north of the cathedral lies the **Burg**, once the residence of Friedrich III, who briefly made Graz one of three imperial capitals in the mid-fifteenth century (he also maintained courts at Wiener Neustadt and Linz). Now much rebuilt and given over to local government offices, only the courtyards are open to the public and there's nothing specific to visit here save for the double spiral of a fifteenth-century Gothic staircase, found in the archway at the end of the first courtyard. Another archway leads eastwards through the wall of the Burg directly into the Stadtpark (see p.278), while Hofgasse heads west from the Burg towards Sporgasse, a busy shopping street that winds its way along the flanks of the Schlossberg.

In its upper reaches Sporgasse becomes Paulustorgasse, where the **Volkskundenmuseum** at no. 13 (Volkskundenmseum; Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €5.50; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid) houses an absorbing collection of traditional costumes and reconstructed house interiors, alongside a curious Baroque sculpture of the bearded woman St Kümmernis. According to legend, the young woman in question prayed for facial hair in an attempt to repel the advances of a husband forced upon her by her heathen father. Crucified by way of punishment, she went on to become an important symbol of piety during the Catholic upsurge of the Counter-Reformation.

Sackstrasse and the Schlossberg

Leading out of the northern end of the Hauptplatz, **Sackstrasse** is one of Graz's most attractive streets, where former town houses of the nobility preside over the bustle of shoppers and rumble of trams. The plain exterior of the

seventeenth-century **Palais Herberstein** at no. 16, built as a pied-à-terre for the Eggenberg family (see p.280), hides a marvellous Rococo interior, which now provides the backdrop to whatever is on display at the **Neue Galerie** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €7; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid; Ⓦwww.neuegalerie.at), one of Graz's main venues for changing exhibitions of modern art. The Palais Khuenberg next door at no. 18 was the birthplace of ill-starred Archduke Franz-Ferdinand in 1863, and currently houses the **Stadtmuseum** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €2; Ⓦwww.stadtmuseum-graz.at), which houses themed exhibitions of local interest rather than a permanent collection.

From Schlossbergplatz, halfway down Sackstrasse, a balustraded stone staircase zigzags up to the **Schlossberg**, a wooded hill overlooking the town. Immediately underneath the staircase a tunnel leads to the **Dom im Berg** or "Cathedral in the Mountain"; an atmospheric, barrel-vaulted space hosting state-of-the-art multimedia cultural exhibitions (times and prices depend on what's on) occupying one of the cavernous chambers used as bomb shelters during World War II. The tunnel continues past the Dom, climbing a gentle gradient before emerging on the eastern side of the Schlossberg – from where you can follow paths up towards the summit of the hill itself. Easier ways of scaling the Schlossberg include the Schlossberg lift (entrance right beside the Dom im Berg; April–Oct Mon–Sat 9am–2am, Sun 9am–midnight; Nov–March daily 10am–11pm; €1.80), or the Schlossbergbahn funicular, which departs from Sackstrasse's northern end (April–Sept 9am–11pm; Oct–March 10am–10pm; €1.80). Tickets bought at either are valid on both. However you arrive, the top of the Schlossberg is one of the most popular strolling venues in the whole of Graz, a concentrated patch of wooded parkland from which you can savour panoramic views of the city. The Schloss from which the hill derives its name was the key point in the city's defences from the Middle Ages onwards, and held out stoutly against Napoleon's armies in 1809. Now only two main features survive, the first of which is the sixteenth-century **Uhrturm**, or clock tower, near the top of the staircase from Sackstrasse, whose steep overhanging roof figures prominently in the town's tourist literature – unusually, the clock's big hand is the hour hand. Uphill to the north, near the summit of the funicular, is the **Glockenturm,** or bell tower, set amidst parklands that are ideal for a picnic or a ramble.

The Stadtpark, the university district and the Augarten

Paths descend southwards from the Schlossberg towards Sporgasse, from where you can soon get back to the Hauptplatz; or eastwards to the **Stadtpark**, a leafy barrier that divides the city centre from the residential suburbs beyond. Laid out on the site of the town fortifications after their demolition in 1784, it's a popular area for a daytime stroll, and a smattering of cafés ensures it remains lively well into the evening. An unassuming pavilion in the middle of the park houses the **Forum Stadtpark** (Tues–Sun 2–6pm; free; http://forum.mur.at), an important centre for avant-garde artists in the 1960s. The temporary exhibitions held here are always worth checking out, and the retro café (Tues–Sat 10am–4pm) on the top floor is an artwork in itself. Continuing southwards, you soon come to the popular *Promenade Café*, just outside the Burgtor, the medieval gate where Hofgasse leads back into the city centre. Across the road from the café is the **Künstlerhaus** (Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, Sun 10am–1pm; €3; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid), another important venue for contemporary art exhibitions.

Immediately east of the Stadtpark lies the **university district**, an initially unwelcoming grid of nineteenth-century apartment blocks around Graz

University, which only really comes to life in the evenings – largely thanks to the numerous bars and eateries catering for a youngish clientele. The imposing, nineteenth-century bulk of the main university building itself lies just off Halbärthgasse, but the surrounding area is short on real sights. From here, Schubertstrasse leads northeast towards the **Botanic Gardens**, about fifteen minutes' walk beyond (glasshouses: Mon–Sat 10am–2pm, Sun 1–3pm; gardens: March–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat & Sun 8am–3pm; free), where Volker Giencke's post-modern greenhouses rise out of the ground like glass-and-steel hillocks.

Returning to the Stadtpark, the broad sweep of the Burgring (later the Opernring) heads downhill towards the southern fringes of the city centre, passing the nineteenth-century **opera house** before arriving at **Jakominiplatz**, an important public transport interchange. Ten minutes' walk south of here lies the **Augarten**, a stretch of riverside park patrolled by pram-wielding parents and strolling pensioners. Lurking at the park's northwestern end at Friedrichgasse 41 is the Oktagon, a former bathhouse that now serves as the **Museum der Wahrnehmung** (Museum of Perception; Wed–Mon 2–6.30pm; €3.50; Ⓦ www.muwa.at), an entertaining but ultimately rather pointless museum that aims to demonstrate the fallibility of human senses through a small selection of installations and visual tricks – such as the "mixed-identity mirror", in which the viewer's features appear to blend with the face of the person sitting opposite.

West of the river

Heading west across the river from the city centre, you can't miss the voluptuously curvy **Kunsthaus Graz** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €7; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid; Ⓦ www.kunsthausgraz.at), opened in 2003 to mark Graz's stint as the European Capital of Culture and immediately nicknamed the "friendly alien". Designed by Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, the building contrasts sharply with its Baroque neighbours, many of which end up being reflected in the Kunsthaus's glass exterior. Embedded in the facade are almost a thousand lights, which can be programmed to display text and simple pictures as well as illuminate the building at night. The Kunsthaus's changing programme of contemporary art shows is frequently as unusual and provocative as the building itself.

Immediately north of the Kunsthaus is the **Murinsel**, a Vito Acconci structure built in 2003 that comprises an island in the centre of the river connected by two graceful sweeps of concrete and metal. On the island a café is surrounded by the rushing waters of the Mur, and an auditorium provides an atmospheric place to catch a performance (check with the tourist office for details).

Immediately behind the Kunsthaus is the pedestrianized Mariahilferstrasse and the **Maria-Hilf-Kirche** (daily 8am–5pm; free), a popular pilgrimage church whose exterior is best viewed from Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Kai on the east bank of the river – from here you can fully appreciate the stupendous twin towers of its facade, each bearing an elegantly tapering onion dome topped by a dazzling golden sunburst. Slightly lower down, the pediment is crowned by a dramatic sculptural ensemble, in which the Archangel Michael hurls a snarling demon towards the street. Inside, the altar picture of the Virgin (hovering above the sick and destitute, accompanied by SS Francis, Anne and Clara) was painted by Pietro de Pomis, the artist and architect employed by both Emperor Ferdinand II and Johann Ulrich von Eggenberg to bring Italian style to Graz. Hiding in cloisters behind the church is Graz's **Diözesianmuseum** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €3), with Baroque statuary and a wealth of late Gothic art including a fifteenth-century altarpiece from Bad Aussee in which St Leonhard

is pictured performing various pious deeds, including releasing minor miscreants from the stocks, and overseeing the construction of an abbey.

Schloss Eggenberg

Situated some 4km west of the city centre at the end of Eggenberger Allee (tram #1 from the Hauptplatz or the train station – get off at Schloss Str), Baroque **Schloss Eggenberg** was built for one of the region's most important families. Hailing from Bad Radkersburg in southeast Styria, the Eggenbergs became leading financiers in Graz before using their wealth to fund military careers. Ruprecht von Eggenberg led Austrian armies against the Turks in the late sixteenth century, and his son Hans Ulrich became Ferdinand II's chief minister. Accorded the title of prince in 1623 and appointed governor of Inner Austria (Styria, Carinthia and present-day Slovenia) two years later, Hans Ulrich was desperate for a residence that would match his status. Pietro de Pomis, already working on Ferdinand II's mausoleum, was the man for the job. Recognizing the post-Renaissance pretensions of Ferdinand II's new generation of courtly followers, de Pomis came up with a building that served as an allegory of universal order. Among the Schloss's more obvious symbols are the four towers marking the points of the compass, the 365 windows, and the 24 state rooms.

A ticket to the grounds (daily: April–Oct 8am–7pm; Nov–March 8am–5pm; €0.30) allows you to amble around the landscaped **park** that boasts deer and peacocks, and take a peek at the palace's elegant galleried courtyard. Inside the palace, separate tickets are sold for the **Alte Galerie**, the city's prime collection of old masters, and the **State Rooms** (Prunkräume), which are only accessible by guided tour. Schloss Eggenberg's archeological collection, famous as the home of the eighth-century-BC Strettweg Chariot, is currently closed pending long-term renovation.

The Alte Galerie

The **Alte Galerie** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm, Thurs until 8pm; €7; Landesmuseum Joanneum tickets valid) begins with a beautifully presented collection of Gothic painting and sculpture, much of it rescued from decay in the village churches of Styria, and credited to anonymous artists known only by the name of the place where their work was found. The "Master of St Lambrecht" is a good example; his *Cavalry Battle of St Louis of Hungary*, depicting the saintly monarch's victory over the Turks in 1377 (a victory attributed to the miraculous powers of the Virgin of Mariazell, see p.292), is a vivid evocation of the horrors of medieval warfare. The prolific fifteenth-century Tyrolean master, Michael Pacher (see p.431), is represented by the two-panel *Scenes from the Life of Thomas à Becket*, showing his martyrdom and funeral. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works on the first floor include a grippingly macabre *Triumph of Death* by Jan Brueghel the Elder and – by way of complete contrast – the knockabout village revelry of his brother Pieter Brueghel the Younger's *St George's Fair*. The rest of the collection focuses on the Austrian Baroque, with a representative selection of work by the "big four" – Rottmayr, Maulbertsch, Tröger and Kremser Schmidt – together with sculptures by the Graz-born J.T. Stammel.

The State Rooms

The fifty-minute guided tour of the **State Rooms** (Prunkräume; German with English-language summary; Easter–Oct: Tues–Sun; tours at 10am, 11am, noon, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm; €7) provides useful insights into the princely world of the Eggenbergs, although ultimately there's a limit to the number of Bohemian glass

chandeliers and Baroque velvety wall-coverings that the human eye can assimilate. Visitors troop round a series of bedrooms, reception rooms and themed rooms (such as the Porcelain Room, with Chinese plates set into the wall, or the Romulus and Remus Room decorated with scenes from Roman mythology), but the highlight is the **Planetensaal**, or Room of the Planets, with paintings depicting signs of the zodiac and a figure of the sun-god Helios symbolizing Emperor Leopold I.

Eating

As befits a city of Graz's size, there are plenty of city-centre **restaurants** catering for a variety of tastes, although real bargains are more usually found in the university district to the east. The centre also has several classic coffeehouses and, as usual in Austria, the distinction between eating and drinking venues is quite a hazy one: many of Graz's cafés and bars (see p.282) serve good food at reasonable prices.

For eating **snack food** on the move, there's a great Würstelstand (Mon–Sat) and several other fast-food outlets on the Hauptplatz. Just outside the train station, the Annenpassage subterranean shopping mall holds several good bakeries offering sandwiches and pastries throughout the day.

Cafés

Hofcafé Edegger Tax Hofgasse 8. Venerable Konditorei whose origins are said to go back to the sixteenth century, selling a range of own-brand chocolates and fancy biscuits. The attached sit-down café is the favoured refuge of the city's more sedate citizens. Not cheap.

Operncafé Opernring 22. Spacious city-centre café, mixing old-fashioned elegance with modernist decor. Attracts a mixed, young and old, crowd during the day, plus a smattering of affluent posers at night.

Promenade Erzherzog-Johann-Allee. Neoclassical pavilion in the Stadtpark with an attractive, high-tech interior and big park-view windows. Good range of lunches and snacks, including plenty of vegetarian options – try the typically Styrian *Kürbiscremesuppe* (cream of pumpkin soup). Usually open till after midnight.

Strehly Sporgasse 12. A Kaffee-Konditorei serving excellent sweets and cakes. A large outdoor seating area makes it popular with city-centre shoppers. Closed Sun.

Tribeka Grieskai 2. International-style coffee-shop serving up strong brews and nice cakes, with a riverside location just opposite the old town. Ultra-convenient for Kunsthaus Graz which is just round the corner.

Restaurants: Central Graz

The following establishments are shown on the "Central Graz" map on p.274.

Aiola Mehlplatz 1. Lounge-bar-cum-restaurant under vaulted ceilings, with a standing-room-only section that gets packed out with smarter drinkers on Fri nights, a space for sit-down eating at the side, and outdoor seating on an old-town square. The Austrian-Mediterranean menu ranges from stodgy Austrian meat-and-potato fare to lighter pastas, salads and fish.

Altsteirische Schmankerlstüb'n Sackstr 10 ⓣ0316/833211. ⓦwww.schmankerlstube.at. Old fashioned and rather snug restaurant offering a traditional Austrian menu of pork, duck and beef-based recipes, alongside Styrian standards such as *Käsernockerl* (cheesy noodles), all washed down with local wines. With mains in the €16–18 range it's not punitively expensive. Soon fills up and reservations are recommended.

Café El Greco Schmiedgasse 18. Although hardly a budget choice, with typical entrées weighing in at around €12, the Greek menu is varied and excellent and there's live bouzouki music most nights. Closed Sun.

Don Camillo Franziskanerplatz. Stylish but homely bar-restaurant with an Italian theme drawing a varied clientele, from the posey to the studenty. Tasty pastas in the €7–8 range, and fancier fish and seafood dishes weighing in at €18–20. Big choice of wines and grappas, plus mouthwatering hams, cheeses and crostini. Closed Sun.

Glöcklbräu Glockenspielplatz 2–3. Traditional Gasthof serving Styrian noodle dishes alongside

Austrian schnitzel and roast-chicken favourites. Other attractions include the main-course-and-salad Mittagsmenüs for under €7, own-brand beer, and an ideal old-town-square location.

Landhauskeller Schmiedgasse 9 ⓣ0316/830276. Top-quality Austrian and Styrian fare in atmospheric medieval surroundings. Outdoor seating in courtyard during summer. Closed Sun. Reservations recommended.

Mangolds Griesgasse 11. Inexpensive self-service health-food restaurant a couple of blocks west of the river, but with limited opening hours: Mon–Fri closes 7pm, Sat closes 4pm; closed Sun.

Pizza Catherina Sporgasse 32. Bright and breezy pizzeria offering outdoor dining in a pleasant cobbled lane and thin-crust pies for around €7.

Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln Heinrichstr 18. Fast-food pub-restaurant decorated in the style of a cosy Gasthof, offering dirt-cheap Schnitzel-and-chips menus at around the €5 mark. A good place to start a nocturnal tour of the university district.

Outside the centre

The following establishments are shown on the "Graz" map on pp.270–271.

Lendplatzl Lendplatz 11 ⓣ716567-0. Homely suite of rooms with a jumble of pictures on the wall, and an outdoor terrace looking out onto one of Graz's busiest market squares. A good place to tuck into Austrian standards such as Wiener Schnitzel and chips, or Styrian *Käsernockerl*-style staples. There's a big choice of local schnapps to work your way through too. At about €20 per person for a meal with drinks it is well affordable.

Weltcafe Gartenstr 28. Organic café-restaurant whose white-cube interior looks like an art gallery. There's a small menu (usually consisting of a soup of the day and a choice of a couple of mains) of tasty veggie food, and it's very cheap. Closed Sun.

Zur Steirerstub'n Lendplatz 8. No-nonsense home cooking with local *Käsernockerl* dishes, Austrian staples like *Zwiebelrostbraten* (roast beef and onions), and list of local wines, all served up in a place that looks like granny's parlour.

Drinking and nightlife

Night-time **drinking** revolves around two specific areas: the so-called **Bermudadreieck**, or "Bermuda Triangle", which comprises the streets of Prokopigasse, Färbergasse and Engegasse immediately east of the Hauptplatz; and the **university district**, east of the city centre beyond the Stadtpark. The Stadtpark itself harbours a couple of cafés and bars that shouldn't be ignored, especially on summer evenings when it's pleasant to sit outside.

For **clubbing**, best place is the *Kulturhauskeller*, Elizabethstr 31 (Tues–Sat from 10pm until the early hours), a cavernous bar-cum-disco in the university district with a relaxed and hedonistic clientele. *Arcadium*, Griesgasse 25 (ⓦwww.arcadium.at), organizes a regular programme of techno, reggae and alternative rock nights. *Postgarage*, fifteen minutes' west of the centre at Dreihackengasse 42 (ⓦwww.postgarage.at), organizes cutting-edge club nights (anything from indie rock to ambient techno) in a friendly space.

Bars: Central Graz

The following establishments are shown on the "Central Graz" map on p.274.

Baltimore Mariahilferplatz 5. One of the best places for a drink on the west bank of the Mur, this tasteful cross between a pub and a café-bar has 1970s rock memorabilia on the walls, a drum kit on the ceiling and a variety of soups, salads and sandwiches on the menu.

Brot & Spiele Mariahilfer Str 17. Roomy bar with several small rooms for drinking and chatting and a large chamber for competitive types featuring billiard tables and dartboards. Also has a substantial menu of bar food.

Café Harrach Harrachgasse 24. An enduringly popular student hangout one block away from the university, offering a smart-but-slightly-bohemian pub atmosphere and substantial snacks.

Eckhaus Rechbauerstr 15. Marking the southern end of the university-district bar crawl, this tunnel-shaped space combines post-industrial decor with

a welcoming, pub-like snugness. There's a good cocktail menu, and toasted sandwiches if you get peckish.

Flann O'Brien's Paradiesgasse. Liveliest of the city's growing number of Irish pubs, attracting a cross-section of Graz society. A large place with lots of seating, it spills onto the Paradiesgasse in the warmer months.

M1 Färberplatz. Smart drinking venue in the heart of the Bermuda Triangle area, on the third floor of a tastefully designed example of contemporary Graz architecture. Roof terrace in summer.

Parkhouse Stadtpark. A pavilion in the park usually open until 2am, with DJs spinning rock and dance music most nights, and live bands often on Sun. There's a big outdoor terrace, and a snack menu featuring tasty salads too.

Stern Sporgasse 38. Medieval vaulted cellar with ascetic nineties' decor, lots of atmospheric nooks and crannies, good cocktails and a relaxed, youngish crowd.

Stockwerk Jakominiplatz 18 ⓣ0316/821433, ⓦwww.stockwerkjazz.mur.at. Funky bar above *McDonald's* with jazz playing either on the sound system or live.

Bars: outside the centre

The following establishments are shown on the "Graz" map on pp.270–271.

Bier Baron Heinrichstr 56 ⓦwww.bierbaron-graz.at. A ten-minute walk east of the Stadtpark, but worth the effort, this large beer-hall-style venue offers over twenty varieties of German, Austrian and Czech beer on tap and a menu that includes grills, pastas, and a small vegetarian selection.

Orange Elizabethstr 30 ⓦwww.cafe-bar-orange.at. University-district bar with a vaguely alternative-but-not-too-grungey musical theme, and a minimalist interior strong on the colour orange – with a couple of mirrorballs added for ironic effect. Weekend crowds spill out into the courtyard terrace in summer.

Die Scherbe Stockergasse 2 ⓦwww.scherbe.com. West-bank bar catering for cool twenty-something drinkers and diners with classy cocktails, fusion cuisine featuring plenty in the way of salads and pastas, matt black furnishings, occasional literary readings and DJs at weekends.

Thomawirt Leonhardstr 42 ⓣ0316/328 637, ⓦwww.thomawirt.at. Brick-lined cellar in the university district with three bars on three levels and a broadly upmarket student-meets-young-professional clientele. There's a full menu of modern-European cuisine (reserve in advance if your heart is set on sit-down eating), and live frequent jazz or pop-rock.

Three Monkeys Elizabethstr 31 ⓦwww.three-monkeys.at. Stylish, dimly lit cellar in the heart of the university district, with late-night drinkers crowding around a giant-sized oblong bar. Dancing at weekends; frequent rock gigs.

Entertainment

Graz's two main cultural institutions are the **Opera**, Kaiser-Josef-Platz 10 (ⓣ0316/8008), for classical music, opera and ballet, and the **Schauspielhaus**, Hofgasse 11 (ⓣ0316/8005), for theatre; both are closed in August. Tickets and

Festivals in Graz

Graz's most important annual event involving high culture is **Styriarte**, a festival of top-quality opera and orchestral music that takes place from mid-June to mid-July. A variety of venues are used, including the Freilichtbuhne (open-air stage) on the Schlossberg. Information is available from the Styriarte Kartenbüro, Sackstr 17 (ⓣ0316/812941-22, ⓦwww.styriarte.com).

The **Steirischer Herbst**, or "Styrian Autumn", takes place from late September to mid-October and focuses on the avant-garde in art, contemporary classical music, jazz, film and theatre. It's a great opportunity to catch up on experimental and groundbreaking work in all fields of culture. Exhibitions and performances take place in venues all over town, and programmes and booking forms can be obtained in advance from the Steirischer Herbst Informationsbüro, Sackstr 17 (ⓣ0316/823007, ⓦwww.steirischerherbst.at).

programme information for both venues are available from the Tageskasse, Kaiser-Josef-Platz (Mon–Fri 8am–8pm; ⓣ0316/8000). Online information is at ⓦwww.theater-graz.com. Touring rock or world music acts play at the Orpheum, Orpheumgasse 8 (ⓣ0316/713473, ⓦwww.orpheumgraz.com). The best way to find out what's going on in Graz is to leaf through the local edition of listings weekly *Falter* (ⓦwww.falter.at); or catch the *Kleiner Zeitung* daily newspaper on Wednesdays when there's a What's On supplement.

Listings

Airport information ⓣ0316/2902-0, ⓦwww.flughafen-graz.at

Bike rental At the train station (daily 9am–5pm; €15 per day).

Books and maps The English Bookshop, Tummelplatz, has a good selection of English-language paperbacks. Freytag & Berndt, Sporgasse 29, has the biggest selection of maps. Mon–Fri 9.30am–6pm, Sat 9.30am–5pm. Moser, am Eisenen Tor 1, is the place to go for glossy English-language magazines.

Car rental Avis, Schlögelgasse 10 (ⓣ0316/812920); Budget, Europaplatz 12 (ⓣ0316/716966); Europcar, at the airport (ⓣ0316/296757); Hertz, Andreas-Hofer-Platz 1 (ⓣ0316/825007).

Cinemas English Royal Cinema, Conrad-von-Hötzendorf-Str 10 (ⓣ0316/826133, ⓦwww.cineplexx.at), shows mainstream films with the original English-language soundtrack; Geidorf Kunstkino, Geidorfplatz (ⓣ0316/321003, ⓦwww.cineplexx.at) is the place to go for art-house films, usually in the original language.

Consulates UK, Schmiedgasse 10 (ⓣ0316/826105). The nearest consulates for other nationalities are in Vienna.

Exchange Banks are open Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–4pm. Outside those hours try the main post office at Neutorgasse 46.

Football Graz has two football teams, Sturm and GAK. Both play at the UPC Arena (formerly the Arnold-Schwarzenegger-Stadion) in Liebenau, 3km south of the centre (tram #4 from the Hauptplatz).

Hospital Krankenhaus der Elisabethinen, Elisabethinergasse 14 ⓣ0316/7063.

Laundry Putzerei Rupp, Jakominstr 34 (Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 8am–noon).

Market Kaiser-Josefs-Platz farmers' market Mon–Sat 6am–1pm.

Pharmacy Bärenapotheker, Herrengasse 11 ⓣ0316/830267. Names and addresses of duty pharmacies are posted in the windows of all pharmacies.

Police Paulustorgasse 8 ⓣ0316/888-0.

Post office Neutorgasse 46 (Mon–Fri 7am–9pm, Sat 8am–2pm).

Swimming pools There's a large open-air pool at the Augartenbad, 1.5km south of the centre on the Schönaugürtel (tram #5 from Hauptplatz to Schönaugürtel); and you'll find both open-air and indoor pools at Bad Eggenberg, 3km west of centre near Schloss Eggenberg (tram #1 from Hauptplatz or the train station).

Taxis Taxi 2801 ⓣ0316/2801; Grazer Taxigenossenschaft ⓣ0316/1718.

Train information ⓣ0316/1717, ⓦwww.oebb.at

Around Graz

The **Österreichisches Freilichtmuseum**, or Austrian Open-Air Museum, is a one-of-a-kind collection of vernacular architecture in an extremely attractive setting some 18km north of Graz. About eight trains a day make the twenty-minute journey from the Styrian capital to **Stübing**, the nearest settlement to the museum. Two other possible day-trips from Graz are the **Lipizzaner stud farm** at Piber and the Hundertwasser-decorated parish church at **Bärnbach**. Both small villages lie just north of the town of Köflach, about 40km west of Graz, which is served by regular trains on the privately owned Graz-Köflacher-Bahn (all rail passes valid).

The Austrian Open-Air Museum

Strung out along a pine-fringed vale, the **Österreichisches Freilichtmuseum** (Easter–Oct Tues–Sun 9am–5pm; €8; ⓦwww.freilichtmuseum.at) preserves more than ninety outstanding examples of **village architecture**. The whole thing is about 2km long, so you'll need a couple of hours in order to take everything in. Indeed there's such a bewildering array that the English-language guidebook sold at the entrance (€3.50) is a worthwhile investment. Traditional **crafts** such as bread-making, spinning and weaving are demonstrated by volunteers over the weekends, weather permitting.

The museum tackles Austrian regional architecture from east to west, so it's the thatched-roofed farmhouses of **Burgenland** that command initial attention. Encrusted with vines, and with verandas running along their south-facing sides, these single-storey buildings have more in common with the architecture of Hungary and the Pannonian Plain than with the alpine, timber-built farmhouses that follow. Of these, there are numerous examples of **Rauchstubenhäuser**, farmhouses in which the living room was built around an open hearth, and which were once widespread across eastern Styria, Carinthia and Salzburg province. The most curious variation on this theme is the **Rauchhaus** from Siezenheim near Salzburg, a chimneyless dwelling in which smoke from the hearth was allowed to escape through slats in the ceiling. Grain was stored in the loft to be dried by the ascending smoke. Further along, the characteristic Tyrolean farmstead familiar from picture-postcard views of the Alps is represented by the **Hansler Farm** from Alpbach, a large square-shaped structure embracing both animal stalls and living quarters. At the far end of the complex stands the **Bregenzerwald Alphütte**, or alpine dairy, where cheese was made and stored during the summer before being taken down into the valley in the autumn.

It's a twenty-minute walk to the museum from Stübing **train station**: turn left out of the station and bear right at the southern end of the village. There's a café-restaurant at the entrance to the museum, and a couple of *Gasthöfe* serve decent lunch fare back in the village.

Piber and Bärnbach

The **Gestüt**, or stud farm, at **PIBER** has provided Lipizzaner horses for the **SPANISCHE REITSCHULE** in Vienna (see p.93) since 1920, when it was moved here from the village of Lipizza (now Lipica in Slovenia). The farm can only be visited by signing up for one of the 90-minute guided tours in German with English-language summaries provided on request (Tues–Sat: April–Oct 9am–5.30pm; daily: Nov–March 9–11am & 1.30–4pm; €11; ⓣ03144/3323, ⓦwww.piber.com). After watching a video providing a brief introduction to the farm's history, you can linger in the stables, and observe the horses grazing on the pastures above the village. Although the horses are renowned for their pure white coats, they are born almost black, gradually becoming lighter as they get older.

A further 2km east, the village of **BÄRNBACH** huddles around the **Pfarrkirche St Barbara** (daily 7.30am–dusk), a church of postwar construction, which was extensively renovated in 1987 by Hundertwasser – the church displays several of his playful, decorative trademarks, notably the use of multi-coloured ceramic surfaces to jazz up the exterior. From a distance, the irregular, bent-looking roof, sporting red tiles covered in green spots, looks like the skin of a friendly cartoon dinosaur, while equally eye-catching are the twelve gates in the small park surrounding the church, each representing one of the world's major religions. Those symbolizing Islam and Judaism are relatively easy to pick

out, although there are some typically Hundertwasseresque eccentricities on display – notably the Urtor ("Ur-gate"), decorated with three round stones, inspired by the spiritual beliefs of prehistoric man (whatever they were), and an undecorated gate which represents the faithless. The church interior is restrained in comparison, but is not without its attention-grabbing set-pieces: Hundertwasser's Lifespiral stained-glass window, a snail-shell swirl of colour to the left as you enter; and Erwin Talker's glass altar, a gargantuan fish tank filled with twelve different layers of soil (taken from the Vatican and Bethlehem among other places) to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel.

From Köflach train station, there are about seven buses a day (fewer Sat & Sun) to Bärnbach, passing through Piber on the way. Should you miss any of the buses, it's easy enough to walk to Piber from the station: head down Bahnhofstrasse to the town's Hauptplatz, turn right, then left onto Piberstrasse, which takes you to the village and the stud farm after thirty to forty minutes. Once you've looked round the farm, you can walk to Bärnbach in about 35 minutes. If you're visiting Bärnbach on its own, it's possible to get off the train at Bärnbach station (one stop before Köflach) and walk the 2km north into the village.

Leibnitz and around

South of Graz, both the A9 motorway and the railway line speed towards the Slovene border, some 40km distant, passing Styria's prime pumpkin- and wine-producing areas en route. Despite being the main market centre for this rolling agricultural landscape, **Leibnitz**, 30km out of Graz, is more of a gateway to the countryside than a tourist town in itself, and it may be better to base yourself somewhere like **Ehrenhausen** just beyond (see opposite) if you're looking for a taste of the rural south. Wherever you stay, the vine-growing villages in the low hills west of Ehrenhausen make for a rewarding excursion.

Leibnitz

LEIBNITZ centres on the **Hauptplatz**, a bustling shopping area with a church at each end, neither of which really merits a visit. The town's main attractions lie on its edge; Rudolf-Hans-Bartsch-Gasse heads west from the Hauptplatz towards the **Seggauberg**, a wooded hill on the other side of the River Sulm. Fifteen minutes' walk up the hill is **Schloss Seggau**, built by the archbishops of Salzburg in the thirteenth century and now used as a conference centre. The Renaissance touches added by the region's subsequent rulers, the bishops of Seckau, can be appreciated by venturing into the elegant, galleried courtyard. Numerous Roman stone reliefs, many of them family gravestones, have been built into the walls of the Schloss, giving the courtyard the appearance of an outdoor sculpture gallery; the adjacent glass-and-steel seminar hall, added in 2003, presents quite a contrast. Visits to the state rooms, including the bishopric of Seckau's picture gallery, are frustratingly infrequent (May–Oct; Sat at 2pm, Sun at 11am; €6; ☎03452/82435).

Immediately south of Seggauberg rises another hill, the **Frauenberg**, site of a Baroque pilgrimage church and the **Tempelmuseum** (April–Oct daily 10am–4pm; €2), built above a Roman-period temple of Isis. Associated with religious cults ever since the Celts first settled the hill a thousand years before Christ, the Frauenberg became a temple district in Roman times serving the people of Flavia Solva down in the valley. There's not much to see here save for the temple foundations and a few sculptural fragments, but the hillside setting is evocative.

Three kilometres southeast of Leibnitz, just beyond the suburb of Wagna, lie the remains of **Flavia Solva**, a once-thriving Roman garrison town established some time around 70 AD. There's little left of the place itself, although there's a small but rewarding display of ceramics, jewellery and sculptural fragments in the **Museumspavilion** (May–Oct Wed noon–6pm, Thurs–Sun 10am–4pm; €3) situated by the roadside.

Practicalities

From Leibnitz's **train** and **bus station** it's a five-minute walk west to the town's Hauptplatz along Bahnhofstrasse and the **tourist office**, tucked away in a courtyard behind the town hall at Sparkassenplatz 4a (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ03452/76811, ⓦwww.leibnitz.info). The office has a wealth of information on the locality and can book **private rooms** (❶) in town or in surrounding villages, including Ehrenhausen. Of the central **hotels**, the *Römerhof*, just southeast of the Hauptplatz at Marburgerstr 1 (ⓣ03452/82419, ⓦwww.hotel-roemerhof.info; ❹–❺), is a good-value three-star which offers en suites with TV and telephone, and also has a good **restaurant**. *Café Elefant* on the Hauptplatz is a great example of how to fit a cool, minimalist interior into a venerable Baroque town-house.

Ehrenhausen and around

Ten kilometres south of Leibnitz, the small village of **EHRENHAUSEN** lurks beneath a wooded crag chosen by the Eggenbergs as the site of the sixteenth-century fortress that served as a base for their campaigns against the Turks. The Eggenberg coat of arms hangs over Ehrenhausen's **Pfarrkirche**, centrepiece of an attractive village Hauptplatz. Most of the cherub-laden interior is the result of an eighteenth-century remodelling, although the high altar features a moving *Pietà* sculpted in the 1430s. On the right side of the nave, a stone relief marks the tomb of Christoph von Eggenberg, shown here kneeling in prayer and flanked by wife Helena and six children.

Christoph's son Ruprecht lies in the **mausoleum**, which dominates the village from a hilltop to the south and is accessible by a stairway from the southern end of the village square. Having made his name by leading the Austrian army against the Turks at the Battle of Sisak in 1593, Ruprecht von Eggenberg engaged Italian architect Pietro de Pomis (whose masterpiece is the Mausoleum of Ferdinand II in Graz; see p.277) to design a suitably imposing funerary monument shortly before his death in 1611. The results are certainly impressive, with an elegant pastel blue facade flanked by towering, fancifully clad warriors, who appear to be sitting on vanquished lions. Austrian master builder Fischer von Erlach was drafted in by Ruprecht's descendants some eighty years later to plan an interior rich in late-Baroque imagery. Held aloft by Corinthian columns wreathed in vines, the cupola shelters four angels brandishing, respectively, a skull, an hourglass, a burning torch and an extinguished torch – all serving as reminders of mortality. Unfortunately the interior is closed to the public – like the imposing Eggenbergs' castle, a short distance above the mausoleum.

Practicalities

There are plenty of private **rooms** (❶) in the environs of both Ehrenhausen and neighbouring Gamlitz, 3km to the east, although you'll have to book them through the tourist office in Leibnitz (see opposite), or simply look for *Zimmer frei* signs. As for **hotels**, there's little to choose between the two nice old inns on Ehrenhausen's main square, both offering good-value, comfortable rooms: *Zum goldenen Löwen*, Hauptplatz 28 (ⓣ03453/2312; ❷), and *Zur Goldenen*

Wine routes in Styria

The best-known **wines** to come out of Styria are the dry white **Gewürztraminers** of the southeast, cultivated around Klöch, a village north of Bad Radkersburg, and the towns of Riegersburg and Hartberg. A variety of other whites are grown around Leibnitz and Ehrenhausen, and **Schilcher**, a medium dry rosé, is produced in the countryside near Deutschlandsberg and Stainz.

All this has encouraged local tourist authorities to promote the idea of the **Weinstrasse**, or wine-road, a suggested touring itinerary that links together the main vine-growing villages of a particular area. The most travelled of these routes in Styria are the **Schilcherstrasse**, which runs from Stainz southwards to Deutschlandsberg and on to Ebiswald near the Slovene border; the **Sausaler Weinstrasse**, which covers a small group of hilltop villages in the Sausal Gebirge just west of Leibnitz; the **Südsteirische Weinstrasse**, starting in Ehrenhausen and zigzagging its way west along the Austrian–Slovene border; and the **Klöcher Weinstrasse**, which heads from Bad Radkersburg northwards to Fehring. Local wine-makers sell their produce from a **Buschenschank**, often no more than a converted garage with a few chairs and tables set out. There you can buy wine by the glass or the bottle, and enjoy a bite to eat, although food may amount to a simple platter of bread and cold meats.

Autumn is a good time to visit, when new wine is offered for tasting alongside a part-fermented, lightly alcoholic grape derivative known as Sturm, which is best quaffed accompanied by another seasonal delicacy, Maroni (roast chestnuts). **Wine festivals** take place in Leutschach on the last weekend of September, Gamlitz on the first weekend of October, and Leibnitz on the second weekend of October (contact Leibnitz tourist office for details, p.287).

Krone, Hauptplatz 24 (Ⓣ03453/2640; ❷). Either of these is also a good place to have a main meal or a quick snack and a drink.

Around Ehrenhausen

West of Ehrenhausen, Bundesstr 69 offers a scenic drive through a succession of villages sheltering beneath steeply banked vineyards. **GAMLITZ**, 3km away, is one of the most picturesque: it has a tourist office at Marktplatz 41 (Ⓣ03453/3922, Ⓦwww.gamlitz.at) as well as its own Schloss, which now holds a privately-owned museum of the wine industry (daily 9am–9pm; €2.50). Eleven kilometres further on, **LEUTSCHACH**, with a tourist office at Hauptplatz 2 (Ⓣ03454/6311), is another rustic wine-producing centre with a sprinkling of private rooms and *Buschenschänken*, or wine-taverns. From here, you can continue onwards to **EBISWALD**, 20km to the west, where a left fork heads for the Radlpass and the Slovene frontier; alternatively, follow a minor road that meanders back towards Ehrenhausen through the extremely picturesque vineyard communities of Sulztal and Ratsch.

Eastern Styria

Road and rail routes heading through eastern Styria pass through arable farmland and orchard-bearing hills towards the southernmost finger of Burgenland and the Hungarian frontier at Szentgotthard. **Feldbach**, forty kilometres out of Graz and 32km from the border, is a convenient point at which to take a breather, not least because it's the obvious jumping-off point for the nearby castle of **Riegersburg**, eastern Styria's most imposing attraction.

Just beyond Feldbach, the branch rail line from Fehring to Wiener Neustadt winds through the hills of the Styria–Burgenland border to **Blumau**, site of Styria's most worthwhile spa.

Feldbach

Most people only stop in **FELDBACH** for as long as it takes to catch a bus to Riegersburg, and it shows. Tourist facilities in this humdrum town are minimal, and there's little to hold the visitor's attention save for the Tabor, a fortified quadrant of buildings erected around the parish church to provide locals with a safe haven from seventeenth-century Hungarian bandits. The Tabor now houses an entertainingly odd array of local **museums** (May–Oct Mon 2–5pm Tues–Fri 9–11am & 2–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; combined entrance fee €3). These include an old smithy, a Styrian fishery museum featuring a variety of historic nets, a fire brigade museum, and an ethnographic collection showcasing antique agricultural implements.

To find the Tabor, simply head down the single road into town from the train station, and you'll see it on your right after about five minutes. Regular **buses** to Riegersburg depart from Feldbach's train station, but if you get stuck here, go to the **tourist office** just beyond the Tabor on the Hauptplatz (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ03152/3079, ⓦwww.feldbach.at) for a list of local **private rooms** (❶) and other accommodation.

Two kilometres north of the town on the Riegersburg road (Feldbach–Riegersburg buses pass by) is **Schloss Kornberg** (March to late Dec daily 10am–6pm; ⓦwww.schlosskornberg.at; €5.50), a Renaissance chateau that boasts a pentagonal galleried courtyard. It's now the venue for themed historical exhibitions and art shows, including a large pre-Christmas crafts fair during the advent season.

Schloss Riegersburg and around

Ten kilometres north of Feldbach, **Schloss Riegersburg** is a breathtaking sight, dominating a landscape of rolling cornfields and pasturelands from a sheer crag of volcanic basalt some 200m above the valley floor. The original fortress was built in 1122 by Rüdiger von Hohenberg to keep the Magyars at bay, although its current extent, including over 3km of walls and numerous gateways and bastions, dates from the seventeenth century, when the Turks were the major threat. It was acquired in 1822 by the Liechtenstein family, who still use parts of the building as a residence.

Pathways lead up from Riegersburg village through a succession of gates and outer fortifications, passing vine-bearing terraces and a memorial to the World War I dead, before arriving at the **Wenzelstor**, the entrance to the inner fortress. Effective use of lighting and audio-visuals help make the **museum** (daily: May–Sept 9am–5pm; Oct–April 10am–5pm; €9.50) one of Austria's better castle-bound collections. Much space is devoted to the life and times of Baroness Elizabeth Galler, who presided over the castle's greatest period of expansion in the mid-seventeenth century, and to the Austrian-Turkish wars which claimed the lives of two of Galler's three husbands. An extensive section on witchcraft explains the background to the witch-hunting hysteria which seized the citizens of nearby Feldbach in the 1670s – one of its victims (represented here by a costumed mannequin) was Katharina Paldauf the "flower witch", so-called because of her alleged ability to cultivate spring blooms in the depths of winter. Most sumptuous of the castle's state rooms is the fifteenth-century **Rittersaal**, whose ceiling and portals display stunningly

intricate wood panelling, although the swirly wedding-cake stuccowork in the seventeenth-century **White Dining Room** runs it a close second.

Four kilometres south of Riegersburg in the village of Bergl (you'll pass through it on the road from Feldbach) is the **Zotter chocolate factory** (☎03152/5554, ⓦwww.zotter.at), one of the finest small-scale producers of sweet-tooth specialities in the country. Zotter's "Chocolate Theatre" tours of the factory (reservations in advance; €8), involve a short film about cocoa harvesting followed by a chance to watch the chocolate production process. There's also a factory shop selling Zotter's product: small bars of smooth chocolate with an unusual range of flavours and fillings.

Practicalities

Riegersburg is 13km south of the Graz–Wiener Neustadt motorway, although there are no direct buses from either of these two towns. For those dependent on public transport, the best way to get here is to take one of the eight daily trains from Graz to Feldbach, where there are seven bus departures a day to Riegersburg. There's a small **tourist office** just outside the lowest of the castle's many gates (☎03153/8670, ⓦwww.riegersburg.com), which will direct you to the growing number of pensions in the village (❶–❷). Good-value **accommodation** includes: *Frühwirth*, Riegersburg 20 (☎03153/8201, ⓦwww.gh-fruehwirth.at; ❸), with small but smart en suites above a popular restaurant; while those at the *Gasthof Fink*, Riegersburg 29 (☎03153/8216, ⓦwww.finkwirt.at; ❹), are a shade more luxurious, and come with TVs.

There is a self-service restaurant immediately outside the castle's Wenzelstor offering excellent inexpensive home cooking and a terrace with great views. Otherwise, the restaurant at *Gasthof Fink* offers the best in terms of classic Austrian fare, while the next-door *Fink Delikatessen* (Mon–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm) is the place to stock up on Styrian wines and specialities – notably Goelles schnapps and vinegar, Fink chutney, and Zotter chocolate.

Blumau

A minor road heads northeast of Riegersburg towards the provincial town of Fürstenfeld, 20km distant, and the village of **BLUMAU**, 10km beyond, a small spa-resort that can also be reached via the branch rail line that leaves the main Graz–Szentgotthard line at Fehring and heads north towards Hartberg. Blumau was a pretty unremarkable place until the opening in 1997 of the ambitious resort complex of the *Rogner Bad Blumau* just north of the village (and a 20min walk from the train station; ☎03383/5100, ⓦwww.blumau.com; ❼), designed by the eccentric architect **Friedensreich Hundertwasser**, whose unorthodox but enduringly popular creations can also be seen in Vienna (p.112) and Bärnbach (p.285). More of a self-contained village than a hotel, the resort draws a regular stream of Hundertwasser-inspired day-trippers, as well as those who want to take the waters. It's an impressive sight, with an irregular jumble of rainbow-coloured accommodation blocks linked by winding, crazily paved pathways to the swimming and spa facilities.

Northern Styria

North of Graz, the gently rolling landscape of the Styrian south gradually gives way to a much more dramatic mixture of deep fir-lined valleys and craggy alpine peaks. Despite its undeniable natural beauty, the area is relatively

▲ Rogner Bad Blumau

untouristy in comparison with the more ski-friendly mountain regions of western Austria. The one long-established focus for travellers is the pretty pilgrimage centre of **Mariazell**, nestling deep in the northeastern corner of the province, although the ore-mining town of **Eisenerz** – with its combination of industrial heritage and alpine beauty – has a mystique all of its own. The populous Murtal is the area's main transport corridor, and harbours a couple of towns that are worth a quick peek before moving on. **Bruck an der Mur** is an important transport hub on the Vienna-to-Villach railway line; **Leoben** is the starting point for routes over the hills to Eisenerz.

Bruck an der Mur

Despite **BRUCK AN DER MUR**'s importance as a road and rail junction, the town itself is an unassuming place that betrays few signs of its role as north-eastern Styria's main business and shopping centre. From the train station at the southern end of town, Bahnhofstrasse leads down towards the foot of the **Schlossberg**, where a couple of pathways ascend towards the meagre remains of Schloss Landskron and an excellent view across the red roofs of the town centre. A five-minute walk down Herzog-Ernst-Strasse brings you to the main square, Koloman-Wallisch-Platz, lined by an attractive ensemble of ochre-hued town houses, and centring on a municipal well that sports an intricate seventeenth-century wrought-iron canopy. The square's most impressive feature is the flowery arcading of the **Kornmesserhaus** on the southeast corner, an incongruous slice of Venetian Gothic built for wealthy ironmonger Pankraz Kornmess in the final years of the fifteenth century.

Bruck's star historical attraction is the **Ruprechtskirche**, a dainty Romanesque church nestling in the town graveyard fifteen minutes' walk west of the square (to get there, cross the River Mur and follow the main Leoben road until you see the graveyard on your left). The church's pride and joy is the fifteenth-century *Last Judgement* fresco occupying the arch above the high altar. A feast of vivid imagery, it portrays white-robed righteous folk trooping off to be met by a key-brandishing St Peter at the gates of paradise, while over to the right, sinners are roped together and led away by demons. The various forms of punishment that await the latter evidently allowed the artist's imagination to run riot; one particular torment involves having to stand in barrels of hot water while being bitten by frog-like amphibians.

Practicalities

Bruck's **tourist office** at Koloman-Wallisch-Platz 1 (Mon–Fri 10am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat 10am–1pm; ⓣ03862/890120, ⓦwww.bruckmur.at), will help you find a **private room** (1), although most of these are in outlying villages and you may need your own transport to get there. Although billed as a **hostel**, the HI-affiliated *Jugend und Familiengästedorf*, Stadtwaldstr 1 (ⓣ03862/58448, ⓦwww.jgh.at; 1), fifteen minutes' walk south of the centre, offers simple but smart double rooms in a woodland setting. Best of the **hotels** are *Schwarzer Adler*, Minoritenplatz 8 (ⓣ03862/56768, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/minoriten; 4), a traditional downtown *Gasthof* with comfy en suites midway between the train station and the main square; and *Arcotel Landskron* (ⓣ3862/58458, ⓦwww.arcotel.co.at; 6), a modern place by the river just west of the square.

There are plenty of **eating and drinking** opportunities on and around the Koloman-Wallisch-Platz. *Gasthof zur Post Riegler* on the corner of the Platz and Schiffgasse is a great mid-range restaurant serving local dishes, such as *Steirergröstl* (small pieces of pan-fried potato, onion and ham), with main courses starting at around €9; while *Da Vinci*, Burggasse 6, is a snazzy pizzeria which doubles as a bar/nightclub at weekends. There are some nice café-bars on the streets leading off the main square, notably *Seinerzeit*, Roseggerstr 28, filled with nostalgic nicknacks, including one half of a VW minivan which now forms the bar.

Mariazell

Ranged on a hillside and encircled by pine-covered mountains, **MARIAZELL** would be worth a visit even without the religious associations that have made it Austria's most important place of pilgrimage. The local population of 2000

▲ Mariazell

welcomes more than a hundred times that number of visitors every year, and although most come to visit the miraculous statue of the Madonna and Child inside the Basilica that dominates the town, Mariazell's alpine charms are also a powerful draw. The presence of the 1266-metre Bürgeralpe immediately to the east and the 1626-metre Gemeindealpe to the northwest ensure good skiing in winter and excellent walking conditions for the rest of the year.

The town has been a spiritual centre ever since Benedictine monks from St Lambrecht (see p.304) established a priory here in 1157, although it's not known when, or exactly why, the site became associated with the miraculous healing powers of the Virgin Mary. The town was certainly on the pilgrimage

circuit by 1377, when King Louis of Hungary attributed his victory over the Turks to the intervention of the Virgin of Mariazell. The cult was subsequently adopted by the Habsburgs as a symbol of the supranational, Catholic unity of the empire, and it remains popular with believers from all over central Europe. Crowds throng the town centre on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer, with special ceremonies taking place on August 15 (Assumption) and September 8 (Birth of the Virgin).

There's no public transport to Mariazell from Graz or Brück, although there are direct buses and trains from St Pölten (see p.159) in Lower Austria.

The Basilika

Girdled at a discreet distance by a ring of souvenir stalls, the **Basilika** (daily: May–Oct 6am–8pm; Nov–April 8am–7pm; free; Ⓦwww.basilika-mariazell.at) looms over all else in Mariazell from its lofty position at the top of the Hauptplatz. Begun in the thirteenth century and enlarged in the seventeenth to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of visitors, it sports a single Gothic spire squeezed awkwardly between later Baroque domes. Once inside, pilgrims congregate around the Gnadenkapelle, or Chapel of Mercy, halfway down the nave, where a twelfth-century statue of the *Virgin and Child* stands behind a silver grille. With the Virgin herself a curiously doll-like figure dressed in billowing silver skirts, the pair's image has become a trademark for the village as a whole, repeated endlessly on souvenirs and devotional prints. More sumptuous still is the high altar, designed by leading Baroque architect Fischer von Erlach and featuring a serpent crawling across a silver-plated globe, overlooked by a cherub-encircled *Crucifixion*. Elsewhere the basilica is stuffed with tombs and relics, the most macabre of which are the glass caskets on either side of the nave holding the remains of third-century saints Paulilus and Modestus, their fragile skeletons shrouded in bejewelled robes. The church **treasury** (Schatzkammer; May–Oct Tues–Sat 10am–3pm, Sun 11am–3pm; €4), approached from the southeastern side of the basilica, houses a treasure trove of ecclesiastical silverware, and a painting of the Virgin given to the church by Louis of Hungary in thanks for his deliverance from the Turks.

The Bürgeralpe and Erlaufsee

There's not much else to Mariazell save for Wienerstrasse, the main shopping street which leads north from the Hauptplatz, passing the terminal for the cable car (daily: May to late Oct & Dec–Easter; €11.50 return) to the **Bürgeralpe**, which commands superb views towards the Hochschwab range to the southwest. Continuing along Wienerstrasse, the road eventually descends into the neighbouring village of **St Sebastian**, site of Mariazell's train station and starting point for the forty-minute walk to **Erlaufsee**, along a well-signed path that starts just behind the station. On summer weekends an antique tram-locomotive makes the trip from the train station to the lake six times a day (€8 return; Ⓦwww.museumstramway.at). The lake itself is a charming spot, fringed by a shingle beach where you can rent pedalos and rowing boats.

Practicalities

Mariazell's **bus station** is on Dr-Leber-Strasse just below the Hauptplatz, while **trains** terminate in St Sebastian, fifteen minutes' walk away to the north. The **tourist office**, Hauptplatz 13 (May–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–5.30pm, Sat 9am–4pm, Sun 9am–12.30pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; Ⓣ03882/2366, Ⓦwww.tiscover.com/mariazell), will arrange **private rooms** (❶) in Mariazell or St Sebastian.

There's a modern, well-appointed HI youth **hostel** in St Sebastian at Erlaufseestr 49 (☎03882/2669), offering smart doubles (❷) and dorm beds. Other good-value **accommodation** includes *Marienheim*, Abelplatz 3 (☎03882/2545; ❷), a simple, centrally located place managed by nuns which offers basic rooms with shared facilities or slightly more expensive en suites; and *Zum Heiligen Brunnen*, a comfortable pension just northeast of the main square at Dr-Lueger-Gasse 10 (☎03882/2131, ✉hl-brunnen@mariazell.at; ❸). Of the several traditional *Gasthöfe* in the centre, both the *Goldene Krone*, Grazerstr 1 (☎03882/2583, ✉krone@mariazell.at; ❸), and the *Brauhaus Mariazell*, Wienerstr 5 (☎03882/2523, 🌐www.bierundbett.at; ❺), manage to combine modern comforts with a bit of olde-worlde atmosphere.

There are plenty of **eating** establishments around the basilica, none of them charging too exploitative prices. You might try *Goldene Krone*, Hauptplatz (closed Thurs), which has an affordable range of typical Austrian main courses as well as salad-based snacks. *Brauhaus Mariazell*, Wienerstr 5, is a great place to eat your way through the classic rustic-Styrian repertoire of goulashes, cheese-and-noodle dishes and *Blunz'nscheiben* (baked blood-sausage slices), and is also one of the best places to **drink** in town, serving the excellent local Girrer beer.

Leoben and around

Nineteen kilometres west of Bruck, **LEOBEN** has been a centre of the Styrian iron industry since the Middle Ages, processing the ore brought down from the hills of Eisenerz 25km to the north. The steelworks in the suburb of Donawitz still blight the northern approaches to the town, but central Leoben, enclosed by a curve of the River Mur, is as attractive as any provincial Styrian town. The ultra-modern **Kunsthalle Leoben**, site of annual art-and-culture exhibitions, is the biggest show in town, although the Gothic murals of the **Stiftskirche** in the nearby suburb of Göss also warrant a visit.

The Town

Leoben's pedestrianized **Hauptplatz** is lined with elegant seventeenth-century facades, most imposing of which is the **Hacklhaus**, at Hauptplatz 9, a stately maroon-and-cream edifice, whose stucco adornments, executed in 1660, include four female figures as allegories of the seasons. Immediately to the west stands the **Stadtpfarrkirche St Xaver**, an imposing monument to the Jesuits who once held sway here, whose interior is very much an ensemble piece: an impressive series of black-framed Baroque altars, each enshrouded in gilded tendrils and leaves. The painting on the high altar, by seventeenth-century Augsburg master Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, shows St Francis-Xavier ascending to heaven above a crowd of writhing plague sufferers, a reference to the saint's status as patron of the seriously ill.

Immediately west of the church a much-restored complex of Jesuit monastery buildings provides a home for **Kunsthalle Leoben** at Kirchgasse 6 (daily 9am–6pm; €12), a state-of-the-art exhibition space that hosts a different ethnography- or art-related show every year. There's a fascinating local history display in the upstairs part of the building, inventively arranged backwards to start with the post-industrial present before finishing up with Neolithic pots. There are plenty of interactive things to do along the way: grown-ups can watch grainy newsreel footage of the local iron-and-steel industry, while kids can try on nineteenth-century burghers' costumes in the dressing-up cupboard.

Leoben's most venerable attraction is the Romanesque **Stiftskirche** in the southern suburb of **Göss**, ensconced among the outbuildings of an erstwhile

Benedictine nunnery. Late-fourteenth-century frescoes fill the arch above the entrance; there's an animated calvary scene, below which a Madonna shelters believers under her cloak. The nearby **Bischofskapelle** contains older paintings but is rarely accessible (Mon–Fri 8am–noon, advance reservation essential, call ⓣ03842/22148). Behind the nunnery lies the brewery responsible for Styria's most ubiquitous ale, Gösserbrau, although the chance to look around the display of brewing techniques through the ages at the **Gösser Braumuseum** is limited to weekends (Sat & Sun 9am–6pm; free; ⓦwww.goesser.at). *Brauhaus Göss*, opposite the nunnery at Turmgasse 3, is a convenient place to stop off, have a bite to eat and sample the local brew. To get to Göss, turn right at the southern end of the Hauptplatz and then left into Gösserstrasse, which runs along the banks of the River Mur – a walk of about 25 minutes. Otherwise, take bus G from Leoben train station.

Practicalities

Leoben's **train station** is fifteen minutes' walk north of town; cross the River Mur and head down Franz-Josef-Strasse to reach the Hauptplatz. The **tourist office** at Hauptplatz 12 (Mon 7am–5pm, Tues–Thurs 7am–6.30pm, Fri 7am–1pm & 3–6.30pm, Sat 9am–12.30pm; ⓣ03842/44018, ⓦwww.leoben.at) has a very limited selection of **private rooms** (1). Most reasonable of the downtown **hotels** is *Zum Möhren*, just off the Hauptplatz at Homanngasse 7/9 (ⓣ03842/42207; 4), which has a number of plain but comfortable en-suite rooms with TV. The similarly central *Hotel Kindler*, Straussgasse 7–11 (ⓣ03842/43202-0, ⓦwww.kindler.at; 5), is a good mid-range choice; all rooms come with bathroom, TV and telephone.

Best of the downtown **cafés** is the *Steinscherer* in the Hacklhaus (closed Sun), which does a good line in cakes, pastries and daytime nibbles, with outdoor seating that spills out onto the square in summer. For more substantial **food**, the nearby *Arkadenhof-Restaurant schwarzer Adler*, Hauptplatz 11, has some reasonably priced Austrian staples in a vaulted inner courtyard; while *Da Vinci*, a block east of the Hauptplatz on the corner of Josef-Graf-Gasse and Langgasse, is a smart and snazzy café-pizzeria with plenty of veggie pasta options.

Eisenerz

It's not often that a landscape scarred by industry proves strikingly attractive, and yet the Erzberg ("ore mountain"), rising above **EISENERZ**, is perversely beautiful, carved into a ziggurat shape by decades of open-cast mining, its colour shifting from ochre to red to purple as the sunlight flits across its slopes. First mined by the Celts, iron ore from Eisenerz went on to feed an armaments industry that helped push Habsburg power southwards and eastwards against the retreating Turks. It continued to provide Austria's iron and steel industry with almost all of its requirements until the 1980s, when underground mining here ceased, priced out of the market by imports from the developing world. A limited amount of open-cast mining on the Erzberg still goes on, although it's now more famous as a tourist-friendly show-mine than a place of hard graft. The presence of one of Austria's few remaining fortified churches and an absorbing town museum ensures that there are plenty of other things to do too.

Eisenerz marks the northern terminus of the **Erzbergbahn**, a narrow-gauge railway originally built to carry ore from Eisenerz south towards Leoben. A tourist-oriented rail service runs between Eisenerz and Vordenberg (from where you can catch onward buses to Leoben) on Sundays between June and September (single ticket €9; return €13.50; ⓦwww.erzbergbahn.at).

The Town

Surveying the attractive town houses of downtown Eisenerz from a hillock to the south is the walled **Pfarrkirche St Oswald**, fortified in the sixteenth century against the advancing Ottoman Turks. The Turks never got this far, but the fortifications proved their worth in 1599 when the Protestant townsfolk warded off an attack led by the Catholic bishop of Seckau. The church itself dates from the thirteenth century, but it gained its current late-Gothic character from an extensive face-lift in the 1470s. It's full of reminders of Eisenerz's mining history: the relief of Adam and Eve above the door as you enter shows Adam dressed in medieval mining gear, while inside a wooden sculpture of a miner high up in the roof strikes a bell every hour. The church's most impressive feature is the organ loft, an ornate piece of late-Gothic stonework carved with interweaving patterns (reminiscent of intricate wicker-work) across which wild beasts frolic.

Below the church lies an attractive main square, **Bergmannsplatz**, grouped around a sixteenth-century **Rathaus** decorated with abstract *sgraffito* motifs. Beside the Rathaus is the **Krippenhaus** (literally the "crib-house"), where exhibitions of the typically Austrian craft of constructing *Krippen*, or Nativity scenes, are held during Advent and at other times of the year (ask at the tourist office for details).

Two hundred metres north of Bergmannsplatz on Schulstrasse, the **Stadt-museum** (May–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 2–5pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–noon; €3.50) is situated in the Kammerhof, once the seat of the imperial officials sent to oversee the iron trade, and taken over as a hunting lodge by Franz-Josef in 1880. There's an imaginative display of local crafts and costumes inside, but it's the section on Eisenerz's mining history that is most interesting. Miners originally belonged to a highly respected medieval guild, whose uniform, the *Maximilianische Tracht*, is modelled by a life-size mannequin chipping away at a rock face. A white, hooded tunic with leather rear flaps (the so-called *Arschleder*, or "arse-leather", necessary for negotiating the wooden slides that linked one mine gallery to another), this garment served as the miners' uniform from the late Middle Ages until the mid-nineteenth century, when it was replaced by more military-style black outfits, still in use today on ceremonial occasions. There are numerous photographs of miners past and present, and an imposing scale model of the Erzberg that dominates an entire room.

The Erzberg

One kilometre east of the centre along the road to Leoben (if you're walking, follow the path which begins opposite the Bipa/Libro supermarket just uphill from Bergmannsplatz), the ticket office of the **Schaubergwerk** (show-mine) marks the starting point for visits to the Iron Mountain itself. The **tour** (May–Oct; departures on the hour; 10am–3pm; €13; Ⓦwww.abenteuer-erzberg.at) involves a ninety-minute trip through the former mine workings with a German-speaking guide; ask for an English-language leaflet at the ticket counter. The trip begins with a bus ride to a midway point up the Berg, where visitors disembark to admire a vast iron ore crusher – a man-made pit that gobbles up rocks thrown at it from the rear of a dumper truck before grinding them down into more manageable morsels. A short trip by underground train then delivers passengers into the heart of the mountain, where the tour continues on foot through a maze of galleries, including the Wendel – a tunnel which corkscrews its way down through the Erzberg, linking one level of the mine to the next. Claustrophobic types might prefer a bumpy though scenic

one-hour ride around the terraces of the Erzberg in the "Hauly", an enormous truck originally designed to transport prodigious amounts of ore (ask at the ticket desk about departures; €13).

Practicalities

Buses terminate on the main Hieflau–Leoben road, 200m uphill from Bergmannsplatz. Five minutes' walk to the west is the **tourist office** at Schulstr 1 (May–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–1pm & 3–5pm; Nov–Dec Mon–Fri 10am–noon & 3–4pm; ⓣ03848/3700, ⓦwww.eisenerz.at), offering a wealth of local information and help with private **rooms** (❶), although many are in outlying villages. Among the **hotels**, *Gasthof zur Post*, Lindmoserstr 10 (ⓣ03848/2232; ❸), is an attractive old inn in the town centre with TV and en-suite facilities in simply furnished rooms. *Gästehaus Weninger*, just around the corner from *zur Post* at Krumpentalerstr 8 (ⓣ03848/2258-0, ⓔweninger@eisenerz.com; ❸), has neat en suites as well as two- to four-person apartments with fridge and kitchenette.

The *Gasthof zur Post* has a restaurant serving standard Austrian **food**, both with good-value main courses from €7 upwards. For evening **drinking** try *Seitensprung*, a rather chic bar in an arcade off Karl-Renner-Strasse; or the *Café City Pub*, an unpretentious, friendly bar near the tourist office at Tullstr 1.

The Murtal

Beyond Leoben, the main road and rail route to western Styria and Carinthia continues to ascend the **Murtal**, passing a string of settlements which, despite their economic importance, harbour few attractions. The few tourist destinations in the area tend to be just off the main valley route: the Benedictine abbey at **Seckau** is reached by bus from the otherwise uninteresting town of Knittelfeld; while the historic highland towns of **Oberzeiring** and **Murau** can be easily accessed from **Judenburg**, arguably the area's most useful transport hub.

Getting around the valley is reasonably straightforward, with Bruck–Klagenfurt expresses speeding through the Murtal towns every hour or so. **Buses** for Oberzeiring start out from Judenburg, while **trains** for Murau use a narrow-gauge branch line which leaves the main route at Unzmarkt, just west of Judenburg.

Stift Seckau

The only reason to stop off in **KNITTELFELD**, a semi-industrialized market town 30km west of Leoben, is to catch buses (Mon–Sat only; 7 daily) to the Benedictine **Stift Seckau** some 16km to the north, an Augustinian foundation established in the mid-twelfth century. Set amid rippling fields patrolled by dairy herds, the abbey served as the ecclesiastical capital of Styria and the seat of its bishops until the modernizing emperor Josef II closed the place down in 1782, moving the episcopal seat to Graz. It was refounded by the Benedictines in 1883, and has flourished ever since, operating a prestigious secondary school which draws in pupils from all over the Murtal – those visiting Seckau on weekday mornings will find the din emanating from the abbey classrooms hard to avoid.

Buses from Knittelfeld train station pull up right outside the abbey gates. Inside, an arcaded Renaissance courtyard is watched over by a fine twin-towered Romanesque **Basilica**, a welcoming golden-brown structure that

looks as if it could have been made from huge chunks of gingerbread. The basilica's west porch features a worn, but recognizably tender, *Madonna and Child* of 1260 in the tympanum, and at ground level, a pair of snarling feline beasts of similar vintage standing guard at either side of the main doorway. The nave is lined with fat, bulging pillars, but is otherwise minimally decorated, focusing all attention on the mesmerizing wooden *Crucifixion*, made around 1140, which hangs above the main altar. The slender, graceful form of Jesus exudes a sense of spiritual calm typical of the art of the period – quite unlike the tortured and often harrowing crucifixion scenes of later medieval art. Figures of the Virgin Mary and St John stand at either side, gazing up towards Christ in wonder rather than grief. To the left of the high altar lies the Mausoleum of Karl II (father of Ferdinand II), fashioned by Lugano artist Alessandro de Verda and completed in 1612. A relief of the emperor, clad in full armour, adorns the lid of the marble sarcophagus, surrounded by cherubs holding up heraldic symbols of the imperial house. Off one side of the nave to the north is the **Bischofskapelle**, remodelled in 1590 by the then bishop of Styria Martin Brenner, who had the chapel decorated with portraits of all Styria's bishops from the earliest times up to and including himself, who can be seen looking pleased with his labours on the back wall. The chapel's main focus, however, is a fifteenth-century altarpiece depicting the *Coronation of the Virgin*, which features Mary and three regal figures representing the Holy Trinity enclosed in a circular frame carved to look like a wreath of twigs, in which angels perch like birds in a tree. Next door in the **Sakramentskapelle**, stagey lighting accentuates the luminous qualities of a small twelfth-century alabaster image of the Virgin.

Seckau is usually visited as a day-trip, although the **tourist office** opposite the abbey gates (Mon–Wed & Fri 8am–noon; Thurs 8am–5pm; ⓣ03514/5205, ⓦwww.seckau.at) has a list of **private rooms** (❶–❷) in local farms. The rather smart *Hofwirt*, just along from the tourist office, doubles as a luxury **hotel** (ⓣ03514/54222, ⓦwww.hofwirt.at; ❹) and top-notch **restaurant**. Marginally more down-to-earth *Gasthof zur Post* (ⓣ03514/5247, ⓦwww.dorfwirt-zurpost.at; ❹), round the corner on Marktstrasse, offers bed and breakfast and serves up satisfying meat-and-potatoes fare from €7.

Judenburg

Dramatically situated on a ridge overlooking the Murtal, **JUDENBURG** was Styria's leading mercantile centre in the late Middle Ages, controlling the trade routes between Vienna, southern Germany and northern Italy. Like most other Murtal towns, Judenburg grew rich on the export of iron (and, oddly, the lavender trade), and was by the fifteenth century an important site for the manufacture of weaponry. The town's name is thought to derive from one of its early medieval rulers, Jutho, although popular tradition subsequently identified it with the large Jewish colony that settled here in the thirteenth century. A pogrom in 1496 forced them to flee the town, and there's little trace of their culture today.

The Town

The scene of lively markets on Saturdays and Mondays, Judenburg's Hauptplatz is dominated by the 75-metre-high **Stadtturm** (May & June Fri–Sun 10am–6pm; July–Sept daily 10am–6pm; Oct Fri–Sun 10am–5pm; €1.50), built in the fifteenth century as a symbol of the town's commercial wealth, although its appearance has drastically altered since then as a result of repeated fires and rebuildings. It's now the venue for temporary historical exhibitions, and there's

a viewing gallery near the top offering a panorama of the local countryside. Beside it is the sixteenth-century **Pfarrkirche**, where the heavy-handed flourishes of the Baroque interior are lightened by a Gothic statue of the *Madonna and Child*, carved locally around 1420.

Kaserngasse heads eastwards from the Hauptplatz to the **Stadtmuseum** at no. 27 (July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 3–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; Sept–June Mon–Fri 9am–noon; donation requested), a rather old-fashioned display of miners' uniforms, tools used by local ironmongers, and the intricate wooden moulds used by tilemakers. There's a reasonable collection of folk art on show, though, including a seventeenth-century wooden Christ figure, which was carried through the town on feast days.

A little further along Kaserngasse, Langganggasse descends to the banks of the Mur, from which the dainty, whitewashed **Magdalenakirche** is clearly visible on the other side of the river. Built around 1350, the church still preserves some of its original stained glass, together with exuberant fourteenth-century frescoes, beginning with a monumental St Christopher, carrying the Christ Child on his shoulder, on the southern exterior wall. Best of the interior frescoes are on the north wall of the choir, where a lively *Crucifixion* scene is busy with gossiping onlookers and Roman soldiers – three of whom squat round a table to play dice, oblivious to the spiritual drama going on above their heads.

Practicalities

Judenburg's **train station** is 500m north of the centre. Turn right into Gussstahlwerkstrasse, cross the river, and take one of the paths leading up into the old town to reach the Hauptplatz. The **bus station** is much nearer at hand, just off Burggasse, one block west of the Hauptplatz. The **tourist office** (Mon–Thurs 9am–12.30pm & 2–5pm, Fri 9am–12.30pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ03572/47127, ⓦwww.judenburg-tourism.at), Hauptplatz 1, has a small list of private **rooms** (1), all within walking distance of the town centre. There's an upmarket **youth hostel**, 200m east of the main square at Kaserngasse 22 (ⓣ03572/87355, ⓦwww.jfgh.at), offering snug en-suite doubles (4) and six-person dorms in a former governmental palace.

Two centrally located **pensions** are *Gasthof Reichsthaler*, Burggasse 22 (ⓣ03572/82448; 3), with several budget-priced rooms with shared bathrooms, and more expensive ones with en-suite facilities; and *Pension Karlbauer*, Herrengasse 4 (ⓣ03572/83415; 1), a smaller, more intimate place where all the rooms come with shower and WC. Also good value and handy for the train station is *Gasthof Murblick*, Sensenwerkgasse 11 (ⓣ03572/83671, ⓦwww.murblick.at; 3), near the Magdalenakirche on the north bank of the Mur, offering cosy en suites with TV – half of which come with excellent views of the old town.

For **food**, *Gashtaus Gruber*, Hauptplatz 6 (closed Mon), offers a broad range of standard Austrian dishes and is a good daytime café, too; *Pizzeria San Marco*, immediately south of the Hauptplatz down the narrow Weyergasse, is consistently the most enjoyable of several pizza outlets in the town centre. *Little Dublin*, Hauptplatz 2, is a cramped but friendly place for an evening **drink**.

Oberzeiring

Eight kilometres beyond Judenburg, a minor road leaves the main westbound route to head northwards towards Liezen in the Enns Valley, crossing the easternmost spur of the Tauern range. After about 10km, a left turn leads to the highland village of **OBERZEIRING**, an ancient silver-mining centre, which provided medieval Judenburg with much of its wealth. Silver extraction ceased in the seventeenth century, although iron ore extraction continued for another

300 years, leaving a network of galleries which can be explored in the **show-mine** (Schaubergwerk; May–Oct tours daily 9.45am, 11am, 1.45pm & 3pm; Nov–April Wed 4pm; minimum of 3 people; €6; Ⓦwww.silbergruben.at) situated just uphill from Oberzeiring's Hauptstrasse. Tours involve a fifty-minute trip through some of the underground workings, passing narrow tunnels in which medieval miners worked on hands and knees, and the preserved skeleton of one of the dogs that dragged leather bags of rock through the galleries. The mine's cool, dry, calcium carbonate-rich air has also helped turn Oberzeiring into a minor health resort, with bronchitis and asthma sufferers flocking into the healing galleries or **Heilstollen** (Ⓣ03571/2811-0, Ⓦwww.heilstollen.at) next door to the show-mine. An hour-long session is relatively easy to arrange if you want to try it, costing around €15, although it's unlikely that anything less than a week-long course of treatment would have any appreciable impact on your health.

Getting to Oberzeiring is pretty straightforward, with hourly buses from Judenburg arriving at the village's tiny main square. The **tourist office**, a few steps away at Marktplatz 5 (Mon–Fri 8am–noon; Ⓣ03571/21700, Ⓦwww.poelstal.info), can arrange **private rooms** (1), and there are a couple of good **hotels**: *Gasthof zum grunen Specht* (Ⓣ03571/2238; 2) is a cosy guesthouse on the main square; while *Silberhof*, just to the west at Hauptstr 22 (Ⓣ03571/2812, Ⓦwww.heilstollen.at; 5), is an altogether more upmarket four-star place specializing in rest cures. There's a **campsite** in a meadow at Bachstr 19 (Ⓣ03571/2438, Ⓔfritz.camp@ainet.at; May–Oct), five minutes from the centre – head to the western end of the village to find the signed turn-off.

Oberwölz

At Niederwölz, 30km west of Judenburg, a minor road heads northwards to the village of **OBERWÖLZ**, another 10km away up the valley of the Wölzer Bach. It's hard to imagine that this isolated settlement of a thousand souls was once a prosperous medieval mercantile centre that grew rich on the profits of the salt and silver trades. Much of the village's fourteenth-century fortifications, including three gates and two towers, still survive, enclosing an endearing jumble of old houses. At its centre stands the **Stadtpfarrkirche St Martin**, a Romanesque structure with Gothic additions embellished by a *Last Judgement* painted around 1500 on the south outer wall. The nearby **Sigmundskirche**, originally the chapel of a fourteenth-century hospital, has some intricate rib vaulting towards the back of the nave.

For those dependent on public transport, Oberwölz is difficult to get to, with only a couple of local buses leaving Niederwölz train station (on the Unzmarkt–Murau line) in the early morning and early afternoon. If you want to stay in Oberwölz, the **tourist office** on the Hauptplatz (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm; Ⓣ03581/8420, Ⓦwww.woelzertal.at) has details of numerous **private rooms** (1) in and around the village, and there are several good **hotels**: the *Graggober*, Stadt 56 (Ⓣ03581/8315; 3), is an attractive chalet-style building, while *Zum Möhren*, Stadt 17 (Ⓣ03581/8383; 3), is an old *Gasthof* attractively modernized, with sauna and solarium on site.

Murau

Of all the provincial towns in Styria, **MURAU** is probably the most attractive, with a photogenic jumble of houses arranged alongside the clear, fast-flowing waters of the young River Mur. Despite the town's isolation from the main tourist routes, a sprinkling of historic churches set against an attractive alpine

The Murtalbahn

The **Murtalbahn**, the privately owned **narrow-gauge railway** that provides a public transport service between Unzmarkt and Tamsweg, also operates tourist-oriented, **steam-hauled** services (☎03532/2233, ⓦwww.stlb.at) in summer. Trains run between Murau and Tamsweg every Tuesday and Wednesday from late June to early September: tickets cost €16.80 each way.

Committed enthusiasts will enjoy the **engine-driver training sessions** that take place at Murau station every Monday morning between early July and late August, offering all-comers the chance to ride up and down for a few minutes in the driver's cab. It's not cheap, though, at €60 for fifteen minutes or €160 for 45 minutes. Interested parties should contact the TUI tourist agency near Murau station at Bahnhofviertel 4a (Mon–Fri 8.30am–12.30pm & 2–6pm; ☎03532/2233, ✉reiebuero-murau@stlb.at) a few days in advance.

backdrop make a detour here worthwhile, and getting here is relatively simple, with regular services on the Murtalbahn narrow-gauge railway running up to town from Unzmarkt on the main Bruck–Klagenfurt line.

Courtly poet and unruly magnate **Ulrich von Liechtenstein** built a castle here in 1250, establishing a market at the foot of the castle soon afterwards. The Murau branch of the Liechtenstein line came to an end when Christoph von Liechtenstein died childless in 1580, but the subsequent marriage of his widow **Anna Neumann** to leading magnate Georg Ludwig zur Schwarzenberg ensured Murau's continuing prosperity. The town's importance as a trading post on the transalpine routes between Italy and Germany is a thing of the past, and although traditional trades like wood carving are still practised here, the town is now largely known as a beer-making centre. Local Murauer Bier is served in all the establishments; the Murauer Doppelmaltz, a dark stout, is also well worth trying.

The Town

A compact town centre is grouped around the triangular **Schillerplatz**, bordered by the elegant town houses of late-medieval merchants. At the western end of the square, a covered walkway leads up to the thirteenth-century **Pfarrkirche St Matthäus**, whose southern face is decorated with a faded but still recognizable fresco of St Christopher holding aloft the boy Jesus. At ground level, plaques marking the graves of sixteenth-century burghers are built into the wall, and an iron grille offers glimpses of the charnel house, home to a chaos of skulls and bones. The frescoes that fill the interior are also faded, but on days when sunlight streams in through the windows the effect can be quite stunning. The oldest works, an *Entombment* and an *Annunciation* dating from the 1370s, are on the south side of the nave, although the faces of the holy ones depicted were rubbed out by iconoclastic protestants in the sixteenth century. Much of the finest work is to be found in the north transept, where the medieval view of life – as a process of attrition over which death always looms – and mortality is summed up by a picture of Eve standing beside the tree of life; two mice nibble at the tree's roots, while a figure of death approaches in the background. The east wall of the north transept is decorated with a memorial to the house of Liechtenstein, painted sometime in the 1570s: Christ's ascent to heaven from Mount Tabor is displayed at the top; just below, successive generations of the family are shown kneeling at the grave of Otto von Liechtenstein. Below this, a series of panels depicts different branches of the family. Christoph von Liechtenstein and Anna Neumann are shown in the top left panel.

A covered wooden stairway leads from the church to the **Schloss Obermurau** perched on the hill above. Originally built as a fortress by Ulrich von Liechtenstein in 1250, the Schloss was converted into a princely residence by Georg Ludwig zur Schwarzenberg in the 1630s. It's still owned by the Schwarzenberg family, and guided tours of the Schloss's state rooms are frustratingly infrequent (mid-June to mid-Sept Wed & Fri 2pm; €3). However, you might be able to get a glimpse inside the fine arcaded courtyard, where one wall is adorned with a seventeenth-century sundial incorporating a figure of Atlas shouldering a globe.

Heading east out of Schillerplatz along Grazerstrasse, an alley to the left leads down to the village graveyard and the **Annakirche**, a Gothic chapel that holds yet more excellent frescoes, most of which date from around 1400. An exhuberant *Tree of Jesse* fills the arch above the entrance to the choir. There's a fine *St George and Dragon* on the north side of the nave, alongside a series of scenes illustrating the *Stations of the Cross*, in which Christ is mocked and tormented by a characterful gallery of low-lifes. St Anne herself is depicted on the south wall of the choir hard up by the main altar, where, together with the infant Jesus, she's cradled by the Virgin Mary. Don't miss the seventeenth-century wooden pews, decorated with curious, griffin-like forms.

A little further out along Grazerstrasse is the **Kapuzinerkirche**, once serving a Capuchin monastery founded by Georg Ludwig zur Schwarzenberg in order to bolster the Counter-Reformation. His grave, alongside that of Anna Neumann, is inside on the left. Next door is the **Heimatmuseum** (tours: mid–June to mid-Sept Thurs & Sat 4pm; €3; ☎3532/2720-11) which documents the contemporary woodcarving industry, and looks back in time at the merchants of the Middle Ages who exported felt and iron across the Alps to Italy and southern Germany.

The oldest church in Murau is the twelfth-century **Ägydikirche**, 1km from the centre on the main eastbound road. It's an endearingly simple, squat structure with a wooden steeple, and there are yet more frescoes inside, including a fifteenth-century picture of St Aegidius on the north wall of the choir, and some thirteenth-century scenes from the Life of the Virgin in the nave.

Practicalities

Murau's **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–5.30pm, Sat 9am–5pm; ☎03532/44800, ⓦwww.stadtmurau.at), immediately outside the **train station** on Bahnhofplatz, will provide a list of the numerous private **rooms** (❶). There are plenty of places in town where you can tuck into traditional Austrian cooking, and a brace of lively bars.

Accommodation

Bärenwirt Schwarzenbergstr 4 ☎03532/2079. An inexpensive, old-fashioned Gasthof in the centre of town offering simple doubles with shared bathrooms and some en suites. ❷–❸

Gasthof Ferner Roseggerstr 9 ☎03532/2318, ⓦwww.hotel-ferner.at. Comfortable family-run hotel north of the centre, whose spacious rooms boast en-suite facilities, telephone and TV. ❹

Hotel zum Brauhaus Raffaltplatz 17 ☎03532/2437, ⓦwww.murau.at/brauhaus. A stylish, modern, business-standard hotel with balconied rooms overlooking the River Mur. ❹

Jugendherberge Murau St-Leonhard-Platz 5 (☎03532/2395, ⓔjgh.murau@jgh.at). Youth hostel near the train station offering beds in dorm rooms and private rooms (❷).

Open Space Schillerplatz 2 ☎03532/2211, ⓦwww.openspace.at. Award-winning piece of architecture right on the main square, offering a mixture of traditional Gasthof cosiness and modern design flair, with a handful of swish doubles, some overlooking the river. ❹

Restaurants and bars

Bärenwirt Schwarzenbergstr 4. Inexpensive restaurant attached to the hotel of the same name serving up Styrian staples from €6.

Gasthof Lercher Schwarzenbergst 10 ⓦ www.lercher.com. A step up in style and quality, with a range of Austrian standards augmented by fresh lamb from nearby hills, and local fish such as *Forelle* (trout) and *Zander* (pike-perch).

Open Space Schillerplatz 2. Futuristic lounge bar in the hotel of the same name, stretching out towards the river in a timber-and-steel overhang slapped onto the back of a traditional town house.

Platzhirsch Schillerplatz. Excellent Italian restaurant/pizzeria and a café-bar that is one of the best places to drink in town, offering occasional live music and themed party nights at weekends.

Stift St Lambrecht

Several daily buses (reduced service on Sat, none on Sun) travel from Murau to the **Stift St Lambrecht**, a Benedictine foundation of eleventh-century vintage set in verdant uplands some 15km southeast of the town. The twin-towered Stiftskirche is largely Gothic, although the main portal displays surviving fragments of the original Romanesque structure. The Baroque interior is dominated by Valentin Khautt's high altar of 1632, a stuccoed, marble-effect ensemble of statues surrounding a painting of the *Assumption*, and crowned by a figure of St Michael. Also inside the abbey courtyard is the smaller Peterskirche, housing a winged altar bearing a *Crucifixion* and various saints by the fifteenth-century Master of St Lambrecht. The abbey buildings are only accessible by tour (mid-May to mid–Oct Mon–Sat 10.45am & 2.30pm, Sun 2.30pm; €6; ⓦ www.stiftstlambrecht.at), which takes in the abbey church, a collection of stuffed birds; and an optional visit to the monastic art collection, which is rich in Gothic wood sculpture.

The Ennstal

Rising in the Salzburger Land and emptying into the Danube just east of Linz, the River Enns cuts through the mountainous northwestern corner of Styria to create one of the more attractive subalpine itineraries in this part of Austria. Although the market town of **Liezen** is the valley's main commercial centre, there are few obvious tourist destinations save for the rustic village of **Admont**; and the sophisticated winter sports centre of **Schladming**, which provides access to the slopes of the region's most impressive peak, the **Dachstein**.

The mountains of central Styria render the Enns Valley slightly isolated from the rest of the province, but both the A9 autobahn and a main Linz- and Salzburg-bound rail route provide access to the region, leaving the Murtal at St Michael and heading northwest through the **Eisenerzer Alpen** before reaching the lower Enns Valley at the village of **Selzthal**, a transport hub that's otherwise pretty unremarkable. From here, the Salzburg-bound road and rail routes lead westwards to the upper Enns Valley and Schladming, while a secondary road and branch line lead to Admont, just east of Selzthal.

Approaching the area from Eisenerz to the east, you'll pass through the former iron-working town of **Hieflau** (where rail travellers must change trains) before proceeding to **Admont** through the **Gesäuse**, a fifteen-kilometre-long gorge where the River Enns forces its way between forested hillsides and rugged cliffs.

Admont

A sleepy agricultural community set against the backdrop of the **Haller Mauern** Mountains to the north, **ADMONT** owes its place on the tourist map to the library and museum collections of the Benedictine abbey that stands at the

▲ Admont

centre of the village. However, Admont's charm doesn't end there – surrounded by pasturelands and wooded hills, it's an excellent place for a rural breather.

Founded in the eleventh century by Hemma von Friesach, the same Carinthian noblewoman who established the monastery at Gurk (see p.336), **Admont Stift** (April–Oct daily 10am–5pm; out of season by request; €9; ⓦwww.stiftadmont.at) has gone through numerous reincarnations over the centuries. Remodelled in the Baroque style in the seventeenth century, it was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1865, and today you're greeted by a rather grim-looking neo-Gothic reconstruction. Happily, the sumptuous **library** was largely untouched by the conflagration, and it's this that most visitors come to see. Built in 1774, the library's interior decorations add up to

a vast allegory of human learning: ceiling frescoes by Bartolomeo Altomonte, a sequence of heavenly skyscapes filled with pinkish clouds, show figures representing the arts, the natural sciences and theology, while the busts of famous intellectuals that hover above the ornate library shelves embrace the gamut of cultural endeavour from Socrates to Dürer. The focus of the library at ground level is the ensemble of four limewood figures by Josef Stammel, representing *Heaven*, *Hell*, *Justice* and *Death* – the skeletal, winged personification of the latter, glowering over the shoulder of a hurrying mortal, is the Graz-born sculptor's greatest masterpiece. Display cases contain some of the library's most valued possessions, including some beautifully illustrated medieval manuscripts.

Although the library is undoubtedly the highlight, the entrance ticket also gives access to parts of the monastery's extensive and impressive art and natural history collections, where the **religious artefacts** steal the show. These include relics from the fourteenth century onwards – many dripping in gems – and most impressively a number of seventeenth-century vestments sporting some painstaking needlework by the hands of a hugely talented resident monk. In amongst the collection are some non-ecclesiastical treasures as well, most notably two globes belonging to Mercator, whose projection of the earth onto flat world maps remains the most common in use today.

More recent works include the large, strikingly colourful and upbeat collection of paintings by Austrian **Alfred Klinkam**, who during the 1970s and 80s was a major proponent of the *Neuen Malerei*: a school that made a stand against the rigidity of the avant-garde movement. Less impressive are the museum's recently acquired pieces of self-indulgent contemporary art, which can happily be skipped.

Time is better spent looking at the **natural history** collection, which has a dusty Victorian glory about it. The highlight here is the taxidermy collection, with rows upon rows of stuffed glassy-eyed mammals and birds beautifully preserved. Among the expected assortment, there's also an unfortunate eight-legged sheep and an example of the famously extinct Great Auk.

Practicalities

Admont's **tourist office**, Hauptplatz 4 (May–Oct: Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 10am–4pm; Nov–April: Mon–Sat 8am–5pm; ⓣ03613/2116, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/admont), will direct you to private **rooms** (1) in both Admont and the neighbouring village of Hall (500m north). *Jugendherberge Röthelstein* (ⓣ03613/26196, ⓦwww.jfgh.at; no dorms; en-suite doubles only; 4), Austria's most impressive **youth hostel**, is situated on a hill just south of the town in an elegant Renaissance Schloss commanding excellent views across the valley. There's also a less atmospheric modern hostel, five minutes' walk west of the centre of Admont and signposted from the Hauptstrasse, at Schulstr 446 (ⓣ03613/2423, ⓦwww.jfgh.at; no dorms; en-suite doubles 3).

More centrally, *Gästehaus Mafalda*, Obere Bachgasse 75 (ⓣ03613/2188; 2), is a pleasant six-room bed and breakfast with cosy en suites; while the slightly grander *Gasthof Zeiser*, Hauptstr 6 (ⓣ03613/2147, ⓔgasthof.zeiser@aon.at; 3), offers rooms with bathrooms and TV. The swishest place to stay in the village is *Landgasthof Buchner*, 200m west of the abbey (ⓣ03613/2801; 3), where you'll find smart modern rooms with TV, minibar and telephone along with a good-value breakfast buffet. The nearest **campsite** (ⓣ0664/825 2312) is in Gstatterboden, around 18km east by car alongside the Gesäuse, or a five-minute walk west from Gstatterboden's train station.

Most **eating and drinking** takes place along the Hauptstrasse: *Café Wagner*, Hauptstr 5, is a good place for a quick sandwich or sausage; *Gasthaus Kamper*,

at no. 19, has good-value Austrian staples, cheap lunchtime choices and nice outdoor seating. The *Stiftskeller*, a swish modern café-restaurant in the abbey grounds, offers top-notch local specialities (try the *Ennstaler Nock'n-Reindl* – noodles in ham and cream sauce) from about €8, although it tends to close by 8pm on weekdays. *Pub Gesäuse-Eingang*, Hauptstr 4, is a late-opening bar with snack food; *Café-Pub Pfiff*, Hauptstr 7, is rowdier and rockier in its musical tastes.

Schladming

Fifteen kilometres west of Admont at Selzthal, the route forks, with the A9 Autobahn and a main rail route heading north into Upper Austria (see Chapter 3), and another route continuing westwards up the Enns Valley towards Salzburg and Innsbruck. After passing the uninteresting, semi-industrialized town of Liezen, the latter route arrives at another major junction 15km upstream, where a branch line and a secondary road leave the Enns Valley at Stainach to climb towards Bad Aussee and the Salzkammergut (see Chapter 8). Continuing west, the valley narrows as impressive mountain ranges – the Dachstein to the north and the Niedere Tauern to the south – make their presence felt.

While the floor of the Enns Valley is dotted with attractive villages (each harbouring a gasthof or two), any of which would make an excellent base for hikes into the surrounding highlands, it's really only **SCHLADMING**, 35km beyond Stainach, that's fully geared up for alpine tourism. Cradled by the southern slopes of the Dachstein, this is Styria's leading winter sports centre and an excellent base for walking, with the 1906-metre-high summit of Mount **Planai** towering over the town to the south and the mountain village of **Rohrmoos** only 5km to the southwest. Both destinations are accessible via gondola from Schladming itself; indeed the downhill run from Planai (a regular venue for World Cup competitions since 1972) ends dramatically just outside the town centre. In addition, the skiing resort of **Ramsau** and the cable-car ride up the **Dachstein** are both only a short bus ride away. From December to April, Schladming is an important package holiday centre, and independent travellers will find that accommodation is both heavily booked in advance and more expensive than during the rest of the year.

The town and the mountains

Originally a silver-mining centre, Schladming was the focus of a miners' and peasants' rebellion in 1525, whose insurgents were punished by having their town razed to the ground. Little of Schladming's medieval character remains, apart from a few surviving traces of the town wall, but its smart shops, flower-bedecked buildings and beautiful background scenery make it an attractive and relaxing base from which to explore the mountains.

Much of the town is modern, reflecting Schladming's rapid tourism-inspired postwar growth, although a jumble of narrow streets west of the Hauptplatz preserves a more village-like feel. One of the nicest houses in this area is the seventeenth-century **Bruderhaus** on Talbachgasse, a traditional wooden building that originally served as a municipal hostel for old miners and widows. It's now the **Stadtmusem** (Tues–Fri 10am–1pm & 4–7pm; Sat & Sun 11am–2pm; €2.50), with the customary display of local crafts and costumes. The Pfarrkirche, north of here on Salzburger Strasse, boasts a yellowy-orange Romanesque tower, but little else to shout about.

The most direct route to higher altitudes is the two-section **Planaibahn** (mid-June to mid-Oct & mid-Dec to March; ⓦ www.planai.at; return €13.50), a gondola that ascends from a terminal east of the Hauptplatz to the

Schladminger Hütte café-restaurant, just below the summit of the 1906-metre Planai. There's a good view of the Dachstein range to the north, and an array of marked paths descending leisurely back down the valley – or winding upwards to the top of the Planai. At the western end of town, the **Rohrmoos-Hochwurzen** gondola (late June to mid-Oct & mid-Dec to March; Ⓦwww.planai.at; return €10) provides access to pleasant alpine meadows (and ski slopes in winter) to the southwest. In summer, hikers' buses serve the three side valleys that lie below Planai and Hochwurzen – Obertal, Untertal and Preuneggtal – which, when combined with the gondolas, facilitate an endless array of walking possibilities. The tourist office (see below) has a leaflet detailing routes and schedules, and also sells the Kompas 1:50,000 Dachstein-Tauern hiking **map**. The Dachstein-Tauern Summer Pass (available from the Planai gondola station) costs €52 for 6 days, €63 for 10 days, and covers all local lifts and buses.

Practicalities

Schladming **train station** is 500m west of town; turn left out of the station building to reach the centre. On the way you'll pass the **tourist office** above a busy roundabout on the western fringe of the centre at Rohrmoosstr 234 (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; Ⓣ03687/22777, Ⓦwww.schladming.at), where you can get information on vacancies in private **rooms** (2) as well as local pensions and **hotels**.

There's a **youth hostel** (Ⓣ03687/24531, Ⓦwww.jgh.at; 3) just east of the main square at Coburgstr 253. *Zirngast*, Rechte Ennsau 633 (Ⓣ03687/23195, Ⓦwww.zirngast.at), is an all-year-round riverside campsite north of the centre: from the train station, head for the tourist office, turn left down Langegasse and cross the river a second time.

There's a wealth of places to **eat** in central Schladming, and an energetic **drinking** scene which becomes particularly lively during the winter season – when après-ski activities kick off in the mountain huts on the Planai before moving down into the valley.

Accommodation

Alte Post Hauptplatz 10 Ⓣ03687/22571, Ⓦwww.posthotel-schladming.at. An old coaching inn offering all the creature comforts. Summer 8; winter 9

Gästehaus Talbach Griesgasse 455 Ⓣ03687/23321, Ⓦwww.talbach.at. A comfortable pension in a chalet-style building beside the Talbach stream, just west of the centre. Summer 3; winter 4.

Haus Fischbacher Schulgasse 590 Ⓣ03687/22011, Ⓔfischbacher@maierkg.at. Family-run bed and breakfast offering balconied rooms in a traditional house. 3

Jugendherberge Schladming Coburgstr 253 Ⓣ03687/24531, Ⓦwww.jgh.at. Youth hostel just east of the main square with neat doubles and 3- to 4-person family rooms. 3

Kirchenwirt Hauptplatz 27 Ⓣ03687/22435, Ⓦwww.kirchenwirt-schladming.com. Simple en-suites in a traditional downtown-Gasthof atmosphere. Summer 5; winter 6

Restaurants

Gasthof Braustüb'n Siedergasse 89. Micro-brewery-cum-restaurant serving filling soups and stews from around €6 as well as own-brand beer (both the light Schwalbenbräu and a rich brown porter).

Giovanni's Siedergasse. Italian place just off the Hauptplatz with a wide choice of inexpensive pizzas and pastas, served up in a split-level bar-restaurant which is also a good place for a drink. Closed Mon.

Kirchenwirt Hauptplatz 27. No-nonsense meat-and-two-veg dishes (including locally-raised lamb) in a suite of wood-panelled rooms.

Lercher Hauptplatz 14. Main-square bakery offering a wide and mouth-watering range of takeaway or eat-in pastries, sandwiches and coffee. Mon–Fri till 6pm, Sat till 1pm.

Talbachschenke Hammerfeldweg. Boisterous pub-cum-restaurant beside the Talbach stream, concentrating on grilled meats. Till 2am.

Skiing in Schladming

Schladming's major **winter sports** asset is the 1906-metre Planai immediately southeast of town, which offers a myriad of beginners' and intermediate runs – as well as one downhill route for advanced skiers, which finishes up at the grandly named Olympiastadion (a concreted-over semicircle where world cup downhill races terminate) just outside the town centre. The nearby 1850m Hochwurzen is less prolific in terms of the number of pistes available, but is another good mountain for novices and intermediates. Two more peaks – the Hauser Kaibling to the east and the Reiteralm to the west – are linked to the Planai and Hochwurzen ski areas by a well-integrated network of lifts (Ⓦwww.4berge.at), making the number of intermediate runs available to the Schladming-based skier pretty limitless. Ramsau am Dachstein has a few downhill slopes for beginners, but is primarily known for cross-country skiing – which can be practised all year round on the Dachstein glacier. A ski pass covering the Schladming–Ramsau am Dachstein region costs €40 for 1 day, €75 for 2 days, €185 for 6 days, €305 for 13 days. The season runs from mid-December to late-March.

Bars

Hanglbar Salzburgerstr 96. Tightly packed town-centre bar with chunky wooden furniture and low wooden ceiling.

La Porta. Salzburgerstr 2. Stylish cellar with a lengthy list of snazzy cocktails.

Onkel Willis Hütte Planai. Mountain-hut après-ski venue just west of the Planaibahn top station, this is one of the most popular drinking spots on the slopes.

Sonderbar corner of Hauptplatz and Salzburgerstr. Frenetic disco-pub that gets going after midnight and stays open until the early hours.

Ramsau and the Dachstein

Immediately north of Schladming, a minor road climbs up towards **Ramsau am Dachstein** – really a string of small hamlets rather than a single village, occupying a south-facing terrace of pastureland suspended high above the Enns Valley. Dotted with wooden farmhouses and grazed by sheep, cows and goats, it's an idyllic, yet highly touristed area, offering an enticing vision of rural prettiness beneath the shadow of the 2995-metre-high **Dachstein**.

The road up from Schladming ends beneath the Dachstein itself, where a cable car conveys visitors to the **Hunerkogel**, some 300m beneath the summit. Eight buses a day make the journey from Schladming to the hamlet of Ramsau-Ort, four of which go all the way to the Dachstein cable-car terminal. The last bus back from the cable car is at 5.50pm (4.50pm Oct–June).

The first place you reach after climbing out of Schladming is **RAMSAU-KULM**, a hamlet famous for its fifteenth-century **church** decorated with frescoes of the time. Pictures of St Christopher carrying the young Jesus, and St George killing the dragon, adorn the north wall of the nave, while in the choir both the *Martyrdom of St Sebastian* and the *Annunciation* are given lively treatment.

Further up the valley is **RAMSAU-ORT**, a major centre for nordic or cross-country skiing in winter, and gentle walks in spring and summer. The **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5pm; Ⓣ03687/81833, Ⓦwww.ramsau.com) in the village centre is the best place to enquire about local **private rooms** (❷).

Three kilometres beyond Ramsau-Ort, a left fork continues to hug the mountainside, while the right fork ascends towards the **Dachstein** cable-car station. The cable car (daily 8am–5pm; Ⓦwww.dachsteingletscher.at; €27 return) ascends to the 2700-metre-high Hunerkogel, where the inevitable café-restaurant sits dramatically atop a lump of rock. A few steps away is the

Dachstein Skywalk (open when the cable-car is running), a wind-lashed steel platform with glass floor – below which is 250 metres of sheer nothing. It's an excellent viewpoint, from which you can look across the Dachstein glacier – a strange sight, with the *loipe* (tracks) used by cross-country skiers running like zebra stripes across its surface – and the mountains of the Salzkammergut to the north, and the vast sweep of the Niedertauern range to the south. A few metres away is the **Dachstein Ice Palace** (Eispalast; daily 8.30am–4.30pm; €5), a sequence of tunnels and chambers carved out of glacier ice and featuring several imaginatively-lit ice sculptures – including a mock-up of the main facade of Athens' Parthenon.

Travel details

Trains

Bruck an der Mur to: Judenburg (12 daily, 50min); Klagenfurt (10 daily; 2hr 10min); Leoben (hourly; 15min); Mariazell (4 daily; 1hr 45min); Unzmarkt (8 daily; 1hr); Vienna (hourly; 2hr); Villach (10 daily; 2hr 40min).

Graz to: Bruck an der Mur (hourly; 45min); Ehrenhausen (24 daily; 55min); Feldbach (16 daily; 50min); Hartberg (6 daily; 1–3hr); Innsbruck (8 daily; 6hr); Kitzbühel (7 daily; 4hr 45min); Köflach (17 daily; 1hr); Leibnitz (24 daily; 45min); Linz (7 daily; 3hr 30min); Salzburg (8 daily; 4hr); Schladming (10 daily; 2hr 30min); Selzthal (13 daily; 1hr 30min); Stainach-Irdning (7 daily; 2hr); Vienna (22 daily; 2hr 30min).

Hieflau to: Eisenerz (8 daily; 25min).

Leibnitz to: Ehrenhausen (24 daily; 10min).

Mariazell to: St Pölten (5 daily; 2hr 40min).

Selzthal to: Admont (7 daily; 20min); Hieflau (7 daily; 40min); Schladming (9 daily; 1hr 10min).

Unzmarkt to: Murau (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 3 daily; Sun 1 daily; 45min).

Buses

Eisenerz to: Leoben (10 daily; 1hr).

Feldbach to: Bad Radkersburg (1 daily; 1hr 10min); Riegersburg (Mon–Fri 7 daily, Sat & Sun 2 daily; 25min).

Graz to: Feldbach (3 daily; 1hr 30min); Hartberg (Mon–Sat 11 daily; Sun 6 daily; 1hr 30min); Köflach (10 daily; 1hr 10min); Voitsberg (1 daily; 1hr 15min).

Hartberg to: Stubenberg (8 daily; 40min); Weiz (7 daily; 1hr).

Judenburg to: Oberzeiring (10 daily; 55min).

Knittelfeld to: Oberzeiring (2 daily; 1hr); Seckau (7 daily; 30min).

Köflach to: Bärnbach (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat & Sun 2 daily; 25min); Piber (Mon–Fri 8 daily; Sat & Sun 2 daily; 15min).

Leibnitz to: Grossklein (8 daily; 25min).

Leoben to: Eisenerz (10 daily; 1hr); Vordenberg (hourly; 20min).

Mariazell to: Mürzzuschlag (1 daily Sat & Sun; 2hr); St Sebastian (8 daily; 20min).

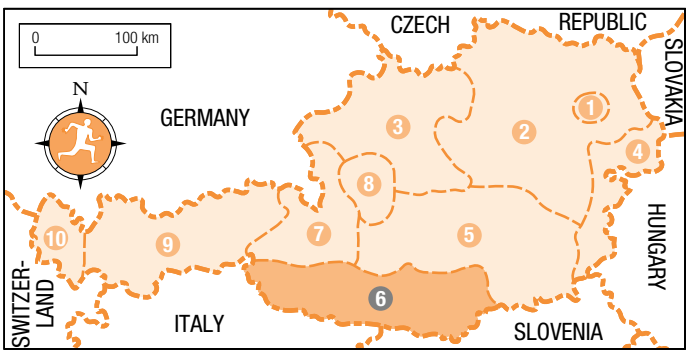
Murau to: St Lambrecht (Mon–Fri 6 daily; Sat 2 daily; 20min).

Niederwölz to: Oberwölz (2 daily; 30min).

Unzmarkt to: Murau (Mon–Fri 2 daily; Sat & Sun 6 daily; 45min).

6

Carinthia and the East Tyrol



CHAPTER 6

Highlights

- **Watersports** Windsurf, waterski, pedalo, sail and row your way around the region's crystalline lakes. See p.316
- **Burg Hochosterwitz** Stunning hilltop Disney-esque castle surveying the Carinthian countryside. See p.335
- **Friesach** Castles, moats and gothic churches cluster together in one of Austria's most characterful medieval towns. See p.338
- **Heinrich-Harrer-Museum** A taste of Tibet and the chance to meditate whilst walking a Lingkor. See p.341
- **Millstatt** One of Carinthia's most refined lakeside resorts, with fin-de-siècle holiday villas providing plenty of architectural charm. See p.351
- **Heiligenblut** Tiny picturesque village towered over by Austria's highest peak, the Grossglockner. See p.356
- **East Tyrol** One of the country's most unspoilt regions, centring on laid-back, cosmopolitan Lienz. See p.358

▲ Burg Hochosterwitz

6

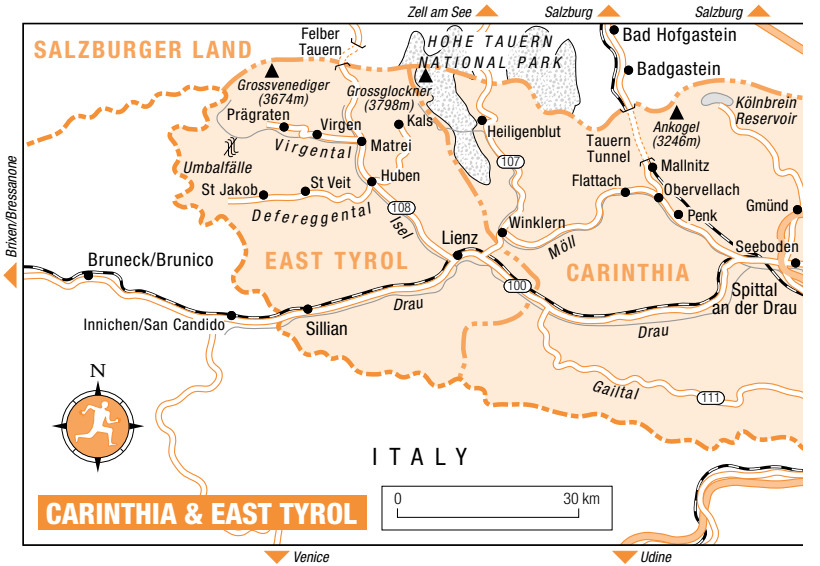
Carinthia and the East Tyrol

Carinthia (Kärnten; ⓦwww.carinthia.at) is regarded by the Austrians – and a great many Germans and Italians too – as one of central Europe's most enticing vacation spots. Austria's southernmost province, it enjoys warm summers and exudes a relaxed, Mediterranean feel which, together with an impressive combination of lake and mountain scenery, make it the perfect place for an outdoor holiday.

Carinthia lacks a historic urban centre capable of competing with the likes of Vienna, Salzburg, Graz or Innsbruck, but the provincial capital **Klagenfurt** is a relaxed, unassuming city and provides a good base for exploring the surrounding area. The city's main claim to fame is its position on the eastern shores of **Wörthersee**, an enduringly popular summer playground that annually attracts a fashionable, affluent crowd, together with hordes of attendant wannabes. Flashy lakeside settlements **Pörtschach** and **Velden** are the main resorts, offering all kinds of water-based activities and swollen with visitors from June onwards through the summer. To the north of Klagenfurt lie the broad, fertile valleys of the Glan and Gurk rivers, tracing an area liberally sprinkled with historical remains. Ruins on the **Magdalensberg** recall periods of Celtic and Roman settlement, while the pilgrimage church in the nearby village of **Maria Saal** stands as testament to the missionary energies of the archbishops of Salzburg, who began the process of converting Carinthia to Christianity in the eighth century. Close at hand is the medieval capital **St Veit an der Glan**, now a picturesque market town, and the sixteenth-century stronghold of **Hochosterwitz**, a breathtakingly situated hilltop castle. Further

The Kärnten Card

A worthwhile investment for anyone spending a reasonable length of time in Carinthia in the summer is the **Kärnten Card** (available early April to late Oct; ⓦwww.kaerntencard.co.at), which allows the bearer free use of all lake steamers, chairlifts and cable cars, free entry to the vast majority of museums and tourist attractions (although it will only get you 50 percent off at Minimundus in Klagenfurt), 50 percent off all public transport and free use of some toll roads. Valid for a two-week (€35) or five-week (€50) period, it's available from all the region's tourist offices.



north, but still within reach of day-trippers from Klagenfurt, lie the charming medieval town of **Friesach** and the important ecclesiastical centre of **Gurk**, famed for its splendid Romanesque cathedral.

Western Carinthia revolves around the province's second city, **Villach**, a lively and sophisticated place with an engaging historic centre. It's an important transport hub, commanding links to Salzburg, Italy and Slovenia, and also acts as the gateway to the relaxing, family oriented lakeside resorts of **Ossiachersee**. North of Villach the main road and rail routes to Salzburg pass **Spittal an der Drau**, a small town built around the imposing Renaissance Schloss Portia, and the jumping-off point for two popular tourist targets – the lakeland paradise of **Millstättersee** and the tiny medieval town of **Gmünd**. Both Spittal and Gmünd are within striking distance of the **Hohe Tauern**, Austria's highest mountain range, shared with the Salzburger Land and the Tyrol, although if you want to immerse yourself fully in the alpine experience you should continue northwestwards to the skiing and mountaineering centre of **Heiligenblut**, a village standing in the shadow of the most imposing Hohe Tauern peak of all, the **Grossglockner.**

The southern slopes of the Hohe Tauern are also accessible from the **East Tyrol** (Osttirol), which borders Carinthia to the west. Geographically isolated by the Tauern range from the rest of the Tyrol, this compact knot of alpine valleys and mountains remains surprisingly untouched by the winter package-holiday trade. Mountain-ringed **Lienz**, small and provincial though it is, serves as regional centre, and offers a good mixture of urban tourism and alpine pursuits, while in the highland villages to the north – notably **Matrei** and the captivatingly beautiful **Kals** – the character of this undervisited region shines through. The area's international atmosphere owes a great deal to the proximity of **Italy** and **Slovenia**.

Carinthia

Carinthia was an important centre of Celtic and Roman culture until the sixth-century arrival of the **Slavs**, who settled all over the southwest alpine region. The area remained predominantly Slav until the eighth century, when local tribes asked the Bavarians for assistance in their struggles against the **Avars**, a race of Turkic interlopers from the east. The Bavarian presence increased over the next century, leading to the Christianization of the province and an influx of German-speaking settlers.

Still considered by the Slovenes to be a cradle of their civilization, there's no doubt that the Slav heritage has left its mark on Carinthia. Local place names (most names ending in *-ach* are of Slavic origin) and Slavic-sounding surnames bear testimony to the non-Germanic roots of a large part of the population. After World War I, the infant **Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes** (the state which subsequently became Yugoslavia) laid claim to southern Carinthia, and a Serb-dominated Yugoslav army moved in to occupy Klagenfurt and the surrounding countryside. Some locals organized themselves into a resistance movement, beginning the so-called **Abwehrkampf** ("Defence-struggle"), memories of which have formed an important plank of the Carinthian patriotic tradition ever since. However, southern Carinthia would probably have been awarded to Yugoslavia by the Versailles peace conference had it not been for the intervention of the Americans, who insisted that a plebiscite be held in order to ascertain the true feelings of the local population. Despite Yugoslav attempts at vote-rigging (the official turnout was over 100 percent), the resulting **Volksabstimmung** of October 10, 1920 produced a majority in favour of the Austrian Republic, and the Yugoslavs were obliged to withdraw. October 10 became a sacred date for Carinthians, and is still celebrated by a wide cross-section of the population as a symbol of Carinthia's undying loyalty

Outdoor activities in the Carinthian Lakes

All of the lake resorts in Carinthia offer a wide choice of **outdoor activities**, ranging from messing around in a rowing boat or pedalo to waterskiing. A brief stroll along any lakefront will give you a good idea of who is offering what; otherwise, the local tourist office will be able to give you the relevant details.

Bike rental There are bike rental facilities in most towns; ordinary bikes tend to cost €10 a day and upwards, whereas mountain bikes can cost as much as €15 or more.

Boat rental Each of the Carinthian lake resorts has numerous outfits that rent out rowing boats (*Ruderboote*) or pedalo-boats (*Tretboote*); electric boats (*Elektroboote*) are also fairly ubiquitous. Typical prices are around €8 for an hour, slightly more for the electric boats, slightly less for the rowing boats.

Golf Two of the most scenic eighteen-hole courses in the region are the Millstättersee Golf Club, above Seeboden (Ⓣ04762/82548, Ⓦwww.golfland.kaernten.at); and the Velden Golf Club at Oberdorf 70, Velden-Köstenberg (Ⓣ04274/7045, Ⓦwww.golfvelden.at). Both are open April–November, weather permitting. Expect to pay green fees in the region of €65.

Sailing Small sailing dinghies are available for hire on all the major lakes for around €15 per hour. Places offering courses are almost everywhere on Wörthersee, Ossiachersee and Millstättersee. The Segel- und Windsurfschule Seeboden at the Santner's Sporthotel in Seeboden on Millstättersee (Ⓣ04762/817140, Ⓦwww.sporthotel-santner.at), or the Segelschule Wörthersee, Seecorso, Saag 15, Wrann Strandbad, Velden (Ⓣ0664/420-2118, Ⓦwww.segelschule-woerthersee.at), are two of the best places to learn, although the sailing schools in the more laid-back village of Döbriach on Millstättersee are worth considering if you want to stay in a quieter resort. Courses are usually tailored to suit all abilities and can last for anything from two days to two weeks; expect to pay between €160–200 for a couple of hours' tuition a day over a five-day period.

Scuba diving You can hire scuba diving (*Tauchen*) equipment or go on a course for the uninitiated at the Millstättersee resorts of Millstatt (enquire at the Strandbad; Ⓣ0676/900-2388) and Seeboden; Alpen-Adria Diving Club, in the Hotel Pichler, Seepromenade 46 (Ⓣ04762/81180, Ⓦwww.strand-hotel.at); or the Ossiachersee resorts of St Andrä (Tauchschule Ing. Patterer; Ⓣ0676/306 4559, Ⓦwww.tauchen.or.at) and Annenheim (Diving Center Ossiachersee, Hotel Aichelberghof, Annenheim Ⓣ0664/130 1266). A full diving course will set you back around €300, whereas equipment hire (so long as you have your log book and diving certificate) is around €30 per day.

Swimming Each of the towns and villages has a little stretch of grassy shoreline, known as the Strandbad, dedicated to sunbathing and watersports. Most have a jetty you can dive off, and charge a small entrance fee (€3.50 in the smaller places, €5.50 in swanky Velden) in the summer season.

Tennis The more chic tennis clubs are in the Wörthersee resorts of Pörtschach and Velden, where court rental weighs in at €10–15 per hour. Prices are slightly cheaper in the Millstättersee resorts of Seeboden and Döbriach, where it might also be easier to get a court.

Waterskiing The Wörthersee resorts of Pörtschach and Velden are the top venues for waterskiing, where most of the boat-rental places along the waterfront offer trips from around €11 per round. It's also very popular in Ossiachersee and Millstättersee.

Windsurfing Numerous places on Wörthersee, Millstättersee and Ossiachersee rent out boards or offer courses. You'll pay around €10 for board rental; €25 for a day or afternoon introductory course; €130 and upwards for five days' tuition. The Segel- und Windsurfschule Seeboden on Millstättersee (see under "Sailing") is situated on a sheltered inlet, and is an especially popular place for children to learn the ropes.

to Austrian values. Carinthian politicians have at times tended to portray the Volksabstimmung as a victory of Austrians over Slovenes, omitting to mention that most local Slovenes in fact voted to remain in Austria in 1920. Slovene loyalty to Carinthia was rewarded with forced Germanization under the first Austrian Republic, and outright expulsions during the Nazi period.

Today, locals who speak the **Slovene language** are hard to find – only 12,500 Carinthians considered it to be their mother tongue according to the 2001 census – although they still occupy a belt of territory in the south of the province stretching from Bleiburg in eastern Carinthia towards the Gailtal in the west. There are bilingual road signs in areas with a mixed population, and Slovene-language high schools in Klagenfurt and Rosental, although the Slovene community is now too small to maintain a culture of great vibrance or visibility.

Because of the patriotic traditions associated with the Abwehrkampf and the Volksabstimmung, unashamed right-wing nationalism is more common in Carinthia than anywhere else in Austria. The survival of conservative values has been aided by Carinthia's predominantly prosperous, semi-rural nature. Hardly surprising, therefore, that Carinthia has become the political powerbase of the controversial **Jörg Haider** (the former FPÖ leader who currently heads the BZÖ), whose mixture of right-wing populism and xenophobia has proved consistently popular in a province which has few economic problems, and very few foreign immigrants.

Politics apart, the image of Carinthia that prevails elsewhere in Austria is largely a positive one: Carinthians are considered to be almost mediterranean in character compared to the country's other inhabitants, with a pronounced sense of style, a taste for the good things in life, and a warm spontaneous nature.

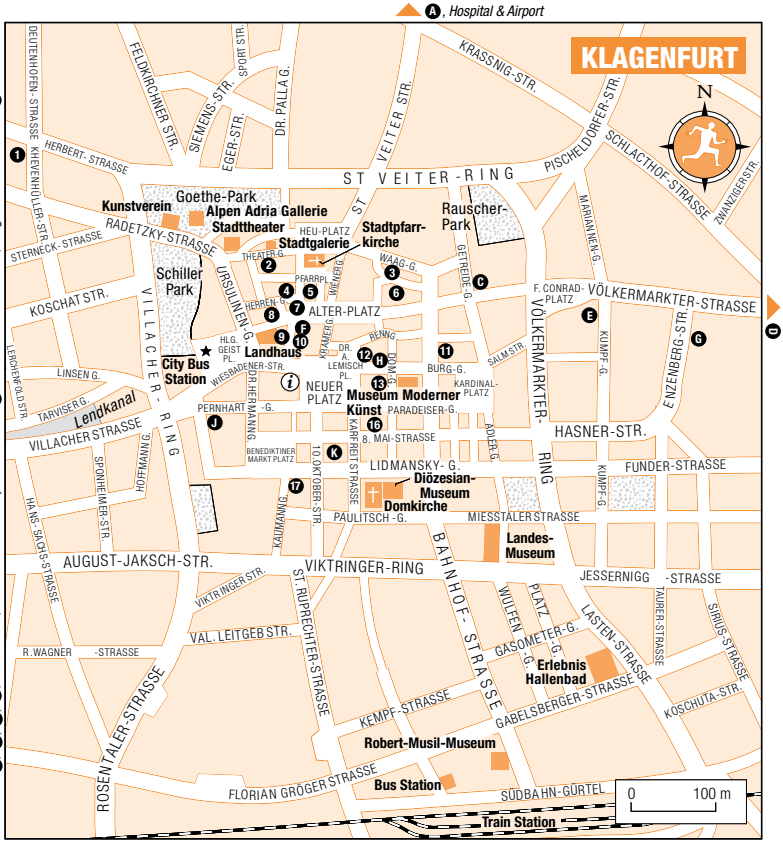
Klagenfurt

Nestling among the low hills of southern Carinthia, sedate and prosperous **KLAGENFURT** may lack the cultural pedigree of Salzburg or Innsbruck, but it's an absorbing provincial capital nevertheless. A small, easily digestible city, its appeal lies mostly in its proximity to Wörthersee, just 3km west of the centre – the lakeside **Europapark**, site of the much-visited **Minimundus**, is a major tourist draw. In addition, a fairly absorbing provincial **museum** and a varied choice of restaurants and nightlife make this a good urban base for touring much of rural Carinthia.

Founded in the twelfth century by the Von Spannheims, a family of soldier-aristocrats from the Rhineland, Klagenfurt grew in importance when Emperor Maximilian I ordered its redevelopment as provincial capital in 1518. Italian architect **Domenico dell'Allio** (who also worked on the Landhaus in Graz; see p.276) was responsible for the town's layout, creating the gridiron street plan still very much in evidence today. As was the case with so many Austrian cities, the town walls were demolished in 1809 on the insistence of the victorious Napoleon – their outline is traced by a quadrangular ring road today. Despite heavy damage in World War II, Klagenfurt's city-centre buildings retain many of their inner courtyards, now harbouring cafés and boutiques, which lend the place considerable charm.

Arrival and information

Both **train** and **bus stations** are on the southern fringes of the centre on the Südbahngürtel. From here it's a straightforward ten-minute walk down



ACCOMMODATION			D	RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS & BARS					
Blumenstöckl	K	Mladinski Dom	H	151-er	14	Kamot	11	Segafredo	7
Geyer	C	Moser-Verdino	I	Bei Uns	8	Landhauskeller	9	Seibenter	
Jugendgästehaus		Müller	F	Da Luigi	1	Maria Loretto	15	Himmel	6
Kolping	G	Palais Hotel Landhaushof	J	Gasthof zum heiligen		Molly Malones	2	VIP	13
Jugendherberge		Sandwirth	M	Josef	3	Osteria dal Conte	10	Zum Augustin	4
Klagenfurt	L	Schlosshotel Wörthersee	A	Grosslockner	17	Pankraz	16		
Liebeteggerr	E	Schlosswirt	B	In Vino Veritas	12	Rathausstüberl	5		
		Schweizerhaus							

Bahnhofstrasse to the town centre, or buses #40 or #41 will take you to Heiligengeistplatz on the centre's western fringe. The airport is 3km to the northeast in the suburb of Annabichl; bus #40 (€1.70) runs into town. Annabichl train station (ten minutes' walk from the airport terminal) offers hourly services either to central Klagenfurt or Carinthian towns to the north.

Heiligengeistplatz, 100m west of the central Neuer Platz, is the main hub for **city bus transport**, with most municipal services either starting there or passing through. A single journey costs €1.70; a 24-hr ticket is €3.70. Tickets are purchased from the driver or Tabak stores.

The main **tourist office** (April–Sept Mon–Fri 8am–8pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; Oct–March Mon–Fri 8am–5pm; ⓣ0463/537223, ⓦwww.info.klagenfurt.at) is in the Rathaus on Neuer Platz. There's also an information point with courtesy phone link to the central tourist office outside

Minimundus on the western approaches to the city, clearly signposted off the A2 autobahn from Villach.

Accommodation

The main tourist office will check vacancies in hotels and book **private rooms** (2), although the latter are in short supply; there are a handful of rooms in the Klagenfurt suburbs, and a few slightly cheaper ones in Viktring, 6km to the southwest (bus #80, #81 or #82).

Klagenfurt's downtown **hotels** include few real budget options, although there are three good **youth hostels** (two of which only open in summer) and a well-appointed **campsite**, *Camping Strandbad* (☎0463/21169; bus #12; May–Sept), just behind the municipal Strandbad in the lakeside Europapark.

Hotels

Blumenstöckl 10-Oktober-Str 11 ☎0463/57793, ⓦwww.blumenstoeckl.at. For those who want comfortable rooms with en-suite facilities and multi-channel TV, bang in the city centre, this is probably the best-value choice. A fine old building with an arcaded courtyard. 5

Geyer Priesterhausgasse 5 ☎0463/57886, ⓦwww.hotelgeyer.com. Modern, medium-sized hotel a few steps away from the town centre. En suites modishly furnished with lots of varnished light-brown wood, warm colours and houseplants. Internet throughout. 6

Liebetegger Völkermarkterstr 8 ☎0463/56935, ⓦwww.liebetegger.com. An unspectacular family-run hotel, that benefits from a convenient location, just east of the town centre. There's a choice of rooms, with or without en-suite facilities. 3–4

Moser-Verdino Domgasse 2 ☎0463/57878, ⓔmoser-verdino@arcotel.at. Luxurious city-centre business hotel, offering comfortable rooms with bathrooms and satellite TV. Computer and emailing facilities available. 7

Müller Rankengasse 21 ☎0463/21254, ⓔvm18514@i-one.at. Small, family-run pension with functional rooms. It's over 2km west of the centre, but is ideally located for the forested parklands of the Kreuzbergl – and you can just about walk to the lakefront from here, too. Rooms are all en suite. 4

Palais Hotel Landhaushof Landhaushof 3 ☎0463/590959, ⓦwww.landhaushof.at. Roomy en suites with modern furnishings in a sensitively restored medieval building that once served as the Salzamt (where Habsburg officials administered the lucrative salt tax). Internet throughout, and there's a sauna and gym on site. 9

Sandwirth Pernhartgasse 9 ☎0463/56209, ⓦwww.sandwirth.at. Central, upmarket hotel offering smart modern rooms with all the creature comforts, plus sauna and fitness facilities. 8

Schlosshotel Wörthersee Villacherstr 338 ☎0463/21158, ⓦwww.schloss-hotel.at. Lakefront hotel in a fanciful nineteenth-century castellated building, with its own beach. All rooms have en-suite facilities and TV, while those with a lake view charge a hefty premium. 5

Schlosswirt St Veiter Str 247 ☎0463/41621, ⓦwww.schlosswirt-klagenfurt.at. Cosy, basic Gasthof near the airport. Bus #40 to Annabichl and then a ten-minute walk north. 3

Schweizerhaus Kreuzbergl 11 ☎0463/56721, ⓦwww.schweizerhaus.co.at. Comfortable TV-equipped en suites in the "Swiss house", an alpine-style Gasthof on the shoulder of Kreuzbergl hill, 1.5km northwest of the centre (follow the footpaths up behind the yellow Kreuzbergl church). Good views of Klagenfurt from the terrace, also the site of a popular restaurant. Perfect for woodland walks. 4

Hostels

Jugendgästehaus Kolping Enzenberstr 26 ☎0463/56965, ⓦwww.kolping-klagenfurt.at. A large modern block only ten minutes' walk east of the centre, with one, two- and three-bedded rooms (from €25 per person) with en-suite showers and fridges. Open mid-July to early Sept – the rest of the year they accommodate students but it's worth calling in case they have space. 3

Jugendherberge Klagenfurt Neckheimgasse 6 ☎0463/230020, ⓔjgh.klagenfurt@oejhv.or.at. An attractively designed piece of contemporary architecture, 3km west of the centre and within walking distance of the lakefront. Open all year round, it offers accommodation in four- and six-bed dorms with en-suite showers for €18 per person (double and single occupancy also available). There are some good bars and pizzerias in the immediate vicinity. Reception is open 5–10pm. Take bus #12 from Heiligengeistplatz to Jugendherberge, or the more frequent #10 to the Neckheimgasse stop, which is only 200m north. Doubles 3.

Mladinski Dom Mikschallee 4 ⓣ0463/35651 ⓦwww.mladinskidom.at. Slovene-run student hostel (the name simply means "youth hostel"), 1.5km east of the centre, open from the first week in July to the end of Aug. Doubles with breakfast (②); singles and triples also available. €17 per person. Bus #70 or #71 from Heiligengeistplatz to Windischkaserne.

The City

Klagenfurt's centre is an easily explored, surprisingly regimented affair, its broad streets ringing the central **Neuer Platz**, home to the ubiquitous **Lindwurm**. Just north of here, broad, shop-lined **Alter Platz** runs east to west, entertaining a wealth of busy cafés on its way to the **Landhaus** and its impressive **Wappensaal**. Heading south, modern Bahnhofstrasse leads straight to the train station, skirting the **Landesmuseum** and the **Robert-Musil-Museum** on the way; whilst immediately west of the centre, Klagenfurt suffers an unfortunate urban sprawl which plugs the gap between the old town, the delights of the much visited **Minimundus** and the summer playground of **Worthersee**.

Neuer Platz

The focus of attention on **Neuer Platz** is a statue of the curly-tailed **Lindwurm**, the mythical beast central to a local George-and-the-Dragon-style folk tale – and very much the city's trademark. Sixteenth-century sculptor Ulrich Vogelsang based the head of the beast on a locally unearthed prehistoric rhino skull (now displayed in the Landesmuseum), which perhaps accounts for its hapless, gaping visage – from which a jet of water spurts into a basin. The Lindwurm is faced by a statue of a club-wielding, Hercules-like hero, added later by Michael Hönel – creator of the spectacular high altar at Gurk (see p.336). This quaint sculptural ensemble is completed by a stout, greening statue of the empress Maria Theresia several metres away to the east, who gazes out onto the square seemingly oblivious to the monster-slaying drama going on in front of her.

From here Kramergasse leads north to **Alter Platz**, heart of a pedestrianized shopping district where most of Klagenfurt's more historic town houses lie. Oldest of these, the **Haus zur goldenes Gans**, stands at the western end of Alter Platz, a squat, medieval structure whose sloping buttresses were built to withstand the minor earthquakes that once shook the area. Behind it loom the twin towers of the **Landhaus**, seat of the Carinthian provincial government although built as an arsenal in the 1580s. Staircases lead from the galleried inner courtyard to the **Wappensaal**, or heraldic hall (April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; €3), the walls of which are covered with the coats of arms of the Carinthian nobility. The trompe l'oeil ceiling paintings by local artist **Josef-Ferdinand Fromiller** (1693–1760) portray nobles paying homage to Emperor Karl VI, father of Maria Theresia. There's more work by Fromiller adorning the ceilings of the **Stadtpfarrkirche St Egyd**, north of Alter Platz on Pfarrplatz, a fourteenth-century edifice studded with aristocratic grave plaques. The main attraction is, however, the church **tower** (Easter to mid-Oct Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat 10am–noon; €1), which rewards a stiff climb with a fine view of Klagenfurt and the surrounding hills.

The Domkirche, Diözesianmuseum and Museum Moderner Kunst

Three blocks south of Neuer Platz on Lidmanskygasse, Klagenfurt's unassuming **Domkirche** has been hemmed in by dreary grey office blocks since the 1970s, making the ebullient creams and pinks of its stuccoed interior all the more pleasantly suprising. This outwardly stern sixteenth-century structure was

originally built at a time when most of Klagenfurt's nobles were protestants; the colourful Baroque redecorating job carried out by the Jesuits, brought into Carinthia to help drive protestantism out, was a deliberate slap in the face of Lutheran austerity. Just round the corner at Lidmanskygasse 10 is the **Diözesianmuseum** (May to mid-June & mid-Sept to mid-Oct Mon–Sat 10am–noon; mid-June to mid-Sept 10am–noon & 3–5pm; €2.50), which harbours altarpieces and statuary retrieved from churches across the province. Pride of place belongs to Austria's oldest piece of stained glass, the twelfth-century *Magdalenscheibe*, a portrayal of Mary Magdalene which once adorned the Magdalenakirche in the village of Weitensfeld, near Gurk.

Three blocks north of here, the **Museum Moderner Kunst**, just east of Neuer Platz at Burggasse 8 (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Ⓦwww.mmkk.at), is the venue of high-profile temporary exhibitions arranged around a recently renovated courtyard.

The Landesmuseum

A block south of Lidmanskygasse, the **Landesmuseum**, Museumgasse 2 (Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, plus Thurs till 8pm; Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; €5; Ⓦwww.landesmuseum-ktn.at), provides a thorough and entertaining lesson in Carinthian history and culture. The overview begins in the entrance hall with the *Fürstenstein*, or prince's stone, a rudimentary throne made from the base of a Roman column and originally located in the village of Karnburg, 7km north of town. Rather like the *Herzogstuhl* (see p.333), the stone was used in ceremonies intended to confirm the authority of the German-speaking dukes of Carinthia over the Slav peasants of the Zollfeld. The ceremony was conducted in the Slovene language, and involved a local farmers' leader asking the duke whether he promised to be a just and Christian ruler before slapping him lightly on the cheek and inviting him to perch on the pillar.

The first floor has a rather pedestrian geology and natural history collection, although it's worth looking out for the *Lindwurmschädel*, the fossilized rhino skull, unearthed near Klagenfurt in the fourteenth century, which served as a model for the Lindwurm statue in Neuer Platz. On the second floor, Hallstaat-era finds from Frög bei Rosegg (5km south of Velden) shed light on the thriving Celtic culture which once existed in Carinthia, including a display case full of exquisitely modelled, miniature lead horse-riding figures, rather like an army of toy soldiers. On a somewhat larger scale is the Roman-era Dionysus mosaic from Virunum (near present-day Maria Saal), first-century capital of the province of Noricum, depicting a youthful and near-naked Dionysus, his cloak slipping casually from a shoulder, surrounded by a colourful supporting cast of similarly *deshabillé* maenads and satyrs. Elsewhere on the same floor, there's a fine collection of Gothic devotional paintings, including the anonymous *St Vitus Altarpiece* of 1470, in which the saint's various torments (beaten with clubs, bundled into an oven and thrown to the lions among other things) are pictured against a fanciful backdrop of fairy-tale turrets and spires. Pride of place belongs to the two pictures relating to the Order of St George once based in Millstatt (see p.351), the first showing the swearing-in ceremony of Johann Siebenhirter as Grand Master of the Order by a boyish-looking Pope Paul II, assisted by Emperor Friedrich III, in 1469; the second showing Siebenhirter's successor Johan Geumann sheltering with his knights under the protective mantle of the Virgin Mary.

Further on, the **ethnographic section** sheds light on some fascinating Carinthian folk customs. Commanding immediate attention are the captivatingly demonic *Partl* masks – still made by craftsmen in rural Carinthia, such

masks are donned on the eve of St Nicholas' Day to represent the bogeyman figure who, rather like Santa Claus in reverse, visits badly behaved children and takes them away in his bag. Nearby are the paper lanterns in the shape of churches used to celebrate the feast of Maria Lichtmess (Candlemass), on February 2, in the village of Eisenkappel in southeast Carinthia. The lanterns are placed in the river and left to float downstream – a practice believed to protect children from mishaps.

The Robert-Musil-Museum

It's a short walk south from the Landesmuseum to the **Robert-Musil-Museum**, at Bahnhofstrasse 50 (Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat 10am–2pm; free; ⓦwww.musilmuseum.at), housed on the lower floor of the building where Austria's leading twentieth-century novelist was born. Musil's connection with Klagenfurt is fairly tenuous – he only spent the first 11 months of his life here – but this is nevertheless an absorbing if stolid introduction to the man and his work, relying heavily on family photographs, German-language texts, and the Underwood Standard Portable typewriter on which he bashed out his manuscripts. There's also a section devoted to Klagenfurt-born writer Ingeborg Bachmann (1921–1973), whose short stories and essays confronted the suffocating conservatism of bourgeois postwar Austria – making her something of a heroine for the country's liberal-leaning artistic elite. There are gripping photographs of Hitler's triumphal visit to Klagenfurt in April 1938, an event witnessed by Bachmann herself. She later described this as the "specific point in time which destroyed my childhood. My memories begin on that day... that terrible, tangible brutality, those troops roaring, singing, marching up and down – and I was scared to death for the first time in my life".

Northwest of the centre

On the other side of the city centre, north of Alter Platz, the **Stadtgalerie**, at Theatergasse 4 (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €5; ⓦwww.stadtgalerie.net), is the town's principal venue for major touring art exhibitions. A few steps west, Theatergasse becomes Theaterplatz, opening out to reveal the striking Art-Nouveau **Stadttheater**, adorned with bare-breasted muses brandishing lyres and functioning as Carinthia's main venue for serious drama, classical music and opera. From here Radetzkystrasse strikes northwestwards, with the verdant strolling areas of the **Goethepark** on the right and the **Schillerpark** on the left. Occupying stately villas in the Goethepark are two more venues for temporary art exhibitions: the **Alpen Adria Galerie**, Theaterplatz 4 (Tues–Fri 10am–7pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; €2.50), and the **Kunstverein für Kärnten** (Tues–Fri 1–7pm, Sat 10am–1pm; free; ⓦwww.kunstvereinkaernten.at).

Radetzkystrasse continues towards Prof-Dr-Kahler-Platz 1km further west, where pathways lead up to the **Kreuzbergl**, an area of partly wooded hilly parkland criss-crossed by paths. Sheltering at the base of the hills on the northern side of the square is a small **Botanischer Garten** (May–Sept daily 9am–6pm; Oct–April Mon–Thurs 7am–4pm; free), a cramped but beautifully laid out collection of native and exotic plants. Lurking at the back of the garden is the entrance to the **Bergbaumuseum** (April–Sept daily 9am–6pm; €5), a mining museum housed in tunnels that served as air-raid shelters in World War II. There are well-presented displays of local minerals and drilling equipment from the lead-mining centre of Bad Bleiberg (50km west of here in the hills above Villach), as well as a dinosaur egg from China, but the potted history of Carinthian mining on offer lacks the punch of Austria's several show-mines; a visit to Bad Bleiberg itself (see p.347) would be a better bet if you have the time.

Robert Musil 1880–1942

If one man could be said to personify the modern Austrian literary tradition it would be **Robert Musil**, whose ironic, cerebral dissections of Austrian society in the early twentieth century have exerted a profound influence over successive generations of novelists. Musil had an unlikely background for a writer. Like many sons of well-to-do Austrian families – his father, Alfred, was professor of engineering at the University of Brünn (now Brno in the Czech republic) – Robert was sent away to a military academy at the age of 12, and looked set to become a promising young officer until he gave it all up and opted to study engineering at Brünn, where his father was still teaching. He spent the next ten years accumulating various degrees, finishing up with a PhD in philosophy at the University of Berlin. Unable to commit himself to an academic career, however, he subsequently worked as a librarian and civil servant before devoting himself entirely to writing in the mid-1920s.

Musil's first novel had been published while he was still a postgraduate student at Berlin. The Confusions of Young Törless (Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless; 1906) explored decadence and sadomasochism at an Austrian military boarding school – something of which Musil himself had personal experience. However, he is primarily known for the vast, unfinished panorama of Viennese society on the eve of World War I, **The Man Without Qualities** (Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften), the first book of which was published in 1930. Part of the second book appeared in 1933, but Musil laboured unsuccessfully over the conclusion: several more fragments were published in 1943, by which time the author was already dead. The book's main protagonist, Ulrich, is very much like Musil himself: a man of science who withdraws from the life of work and career (hence his supposed lack of "qualities"), all the better to contemplate the absurdities of the self-possessed but doomed imperial capital in which he lives.

An intellectual feast brimming with ideas and essayistic digressions, The Man was never going to be a plot-driven populist read. Musil's publishing house, Rohwolt, was advised by its accountants not to publish the book for fear that it would drive the firm to bankruptcy, but went ahead all the same – convinced of the work's importance to European literature. The novel was indeed an instant critical success, but Musil had the misfortune to be writing at a time when the natural audience for his books – the sophisticated urban elite – was being squeezed out of Austrian and German life by the combined forces of Fascism and Nazism. With the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938, Musil fled to Switzerland with his Jewish wife, where he lived in poverty until his death. Musil's works were banned in Austria and Germany by the Nazis – making it impossible for the author to earn any royalties. His only source of income for much of his career came from the Musil societies: ad-hoc groups of friends and supporters who made collections on his behalf.

Despite such acts of generosity, Musil was bitter about the cultural elite's failure to accord him the appreciation which he felt to be his natural right. He had a low opinion of the succesful novelists of the day, and his diaries notoriously accuse Nobel Prize-winning novelist Thomas Mann of cravenly pandering to a mediocre liberal intelligentsia. Musil never knew that Mann was a keen contributor to one of the Musil societies. Musil's international reputation grew slowly but steadily in the years following World War II, and he's nowadays recognized not only as Austria's greatest twentieth-century novelist, but also as a great European figure on a par with Proust.

Europapark, Minimundus and the lakefront

From central Klagenfurt, buses #10, #11 and #12 head due west along Villacherstrasse towards the lakefront 3km away. The street runs along the banks of the **Lendkanal**, built in the late Middle Ages to connect landlocked Klagenfurt to the lake. Between mid-May and late September, a **passenger trimaran** runs along the Lend (€4 single, €7 return; contact the tourist office for times), leaving

town from the eastern end of Villacherstrasse and arriving near the lakefront some twenty minutes later.

Stretching back from the lakefront for about one kilometre is the **Europapark**, a grassy expanse that harbours one of southern Austria's top tourist attractions, **Minimundus**, at Villacherstr 241 (daily: April & Oct 9am–6pm; May, June & Sept 9am–7pm; July & Aug 9am–8pm; €12; Ⓦ www.minimundus.at). With profits going to an Austrian children's charity, it's a popular family-oriented attraction centred around 1:25 scale models of the world's famous buildings – with a smattering of model trains and boats too. A large garden dotted with flowerbeds contains more than 150 models, including many obvious international landmarks (the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, the White House and the like), although there's a sufficient number of less instantly recognizable choices – such as Bulgaria's Rila Monastery and a Yemeni royal palace – to make the official English-language guide booklet (€4), or English audioguide (€2) worthwhile investments.

Just north of Minimundus, **Happ's Reptilienzoo**, Villacherstr 237 (daily: May–Sept 8am–6pm; Oct–April 10am–5pm; €9; Ⓦ www.reptilienzoo.at), provides haven for snakes, lizards and crocs, together with an aquarium – home to some piranhas – and an outdoor model dinosaur garden. In the summer months the zoo also runs free hourly tours with the chance to hold some of their snakes.

The lakefront

The Europapark stretches westwards from Minimundus as far as the lakefront just under 1km away, where Klagenfurt's marvellously old-fashioned municipal **Strandbad** (€3.50) attracts bathers with its deckchair-covered lawns, long wooden piers and pedalos for rent. One incongruous concession to modernity are the two nude sunbathing platforms (one open daily for women, the other shared; Tues, Thurs & Sat men only, open to women on the other four days), separated from other bathers by a screen. Just north of the Strandbad is the ship station, where regular ferries depart for Velden, Pörtschach and other lakeside settlements between May and October. The whole area is understandably busy during the summer, but it's a nice place to stroll whatever the season, thanks to some satisfying views across Wörthersee, and its hilly, forest-covered surrounds.

Maiernigg and the Mahler House

Three kilometres away from Europapark, on the southeastern shoulder of Wörthersee, lie the gently sloping lakeside lawns of **Strandbad Maiernigg** (€3), just outside the city limits, and a quieter alternative to the much larger Strandbad in the Europapark. From here, a well-signed path leads uphill to the **Gustav Mahlers Komponierhäuschen** (May–Oct daily 10am–4pm; €1; Ⓦ www.gustav-mahler.at), the idyllic garden-shed-like retreat built by the composer in 1900, along with his lakeside villa below. Mahler took a two-month break in Maiernigg each summer, rising at 6am and composing in solitude for five hours each day, before swimming in the lake and then heading off across the mountains. In the *Häuschen*, he worked on his Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth symphonies, as well as finishing off the *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs for Dead Children), a song cycle which his wife Alma considered unduly morbid, seeing as the couple were starting a family at the time. In 1907 their elder daughter Maria (Putzi), who wasn't yet 5, contracted scarlet fever at Maiernigg and died, drawing an end to the composer's eight-year love affair with Wörthersee. The Mahlers sold up and never returned. The *Komponierhäuschen* itself contains a few photographs, and there's a stack of Mahler CDs for sale, but the main attraction

is the setting: high above the lake, and shrouded by woods, it's not difficult to see why Mahler found the environment so inspiring.

Maiernigg is a half-hour walk along the pavemented Klagenfurt-Maria-Wörth road from Europapark. Although Klagenfurt–Maria Worth–Velden buses from the bus station pass right by the Strandbad, these are pretty infrequent, making it easier to reach the spot by foot, car or bike.

Eating, drinking and nightlife

In general Klagenfurt's **restaurants** provide a good introduction to Carinthian cuisine, with most places offering a mixture of local *Nud'l* dishes, Austrian staples, and fresh fish from Wörthersee. For **snacks**, there are plenty of kebab shops and pizzerias lining the central stretch of Bahnhofstrasse.

There's a healthy sprinkling of **drinking** venues, a large proportion of which are concentrated in the area around Herrengasse and Pfarrplatz. Most of these keep buzzing until around 1 or 2am throughout the week, except on Sundays, when the city centre can seem eerily deserted. The town also quietens considerably during periods of good summer weather, when locals abandon Klagenfurt's bars in favour of trendier Wörthersee venues like Pörtschach and Velden.

Despite its status as the provincial capital, Klagenfurt is not overflowing with **entertainment** options. That said, the Stadtheater, Theaterplatz 4 (box office; Mon–Sat 9am–1pm & 2–6pm; ⓣ0463/54064, ⓦwww.stadttheater-klagenfurt.at), has an all-year programme of opera, highbrow drama and ballet, and in July and August the **Wörtherseefestspiele** festival presents a series of opera, musicals, theatre and ballet on a purpose-built stage standing on Wörthersee itself. Tickets are available online at ⓦwww.woertherseefestspiele.com, or by calling ⓣ0463/220300.

Restaurants

Arkadenhof Landhaushof 3 ⓣ0463/590959. Smart restaurant in the courtyard of the *Palais Hotel Landhaushof* serving exquisitely prepared and presented European standards, with locally reared beef or Mediterranean seafood mains hovering around the €25 mark. The same menu is served in the adjoining *Salzamt* bar, which is a relaxing place for a glass of wine.

Da Luigi Khevenhüllerstr 2 ⓣ0463/516651. Northwest of the centre, an outwardly unspectacular restaurant that offers top-class Italian-Austrian cuisine, including plenty in the way of top-notch seafood. No official dress restrictions, but you'll feel out of place in jeans and T-shirt. Reservations advisable. Open until 9.30pm only. Closed Sun & Mon.

Gasthof zum heiligen Josef Osterwitzgasse 7. Inexpensive mainstream Austrian food, including all the most popular schnitzel dishes, as well as Wörthersee fish. A good range of cheap soups and salads make this a lunchtime favourite.

Grossglockner (zum Pumpe) Lidmanskygasse 2 . Wonderfully traditional inn near the Benediktinerplatz market with lived-in furniture that's clearly accommodated several generations of drinkers and diners. Inexpensive mains (€7–10) include Carinthian noodle dishes and wonderful goulash. Excellent Puntigamer, Gösser and Zipfer beers on draught. Closed Sat evening & all day Sun.

Landhauskeller Landhaushof. A popular day and night venue with plentiful outdoor seating in the Landhaus courtyard and a warren of atmospherically furnished rooms within. Food is hearty, traditional and reasonably priced: this is a great place to try Austrian classics like Tafelspitz with all the trimmings.

Maria Loretto on Wörthersee, just south of the main Strandbad ⓣ0463/24465. Mid- to high-priced restaurant occupying an attractive lakeside villa, with plentiful outdoor seating facing the water. It's a good place for fresh trout and other Wörthersee fish, although the menu includes all the usual Austrian and Carinthian regulars as well. Closed Mon.

Osteria dal Conte Tabakgasse 4. Smart but subtly bohemian establishment serving delicious Italian pasta dishes and a much wider choice of vegetarian mains than you'll find elsewhere. Moderate prices, and a good wine list with an Italian slant. Closed Sun.

Rathausstüberl Alte Rathausgasse. Cosy central place in an alleyway linking Alter Platz with the Pfarrplatz, providing cheap Carinthian *Nud'l*, good-value schnitzel-based standards, and some good

lunchtime choices, like salad platters and soups. Closed Sun.

Siebenter Himmel Osterwitzgasse 12. Italian wines, and tasty pasta dishes from around €8 in a mellow environment.

Zum Augustin Pfarrhofgasse 2. Roomy and atmospheric eating and drinking venue with wooden bench seating a few steps west of the Pfarrkirche, great for trying the local beer (they brew their own Märzen and sell speciality Gösser beers too) but the food is excellent as well. Expect hearty and inexpensive Carinthian *Nud'l* dishes, goulash, and local oddities like *Kärntner Ritschert* (a piquant stew of pork and beans), with mains weighing in at €10–12. Always full, so expect to squeeze in where you can.

Cafés and bars

151er ("Hunderteinundfunfziger") Höhenweg 151. A little way west of the centre but well worth the trip, this uniquely eccentric café-bar with antique-shop interior and lounge furniture on the lawn is a great place to sip cocktails and tuck in to fancy nibbles. DJs on weekend evenings. Closed Sun.

Bei Uns Herrengasse 1. Barrel-vaulted, standing-room-only bar which attracts more of a twenty- to thirty-something crowd than its Herrengasse neighbours, and plays jazzier, bluesier background music to match. It doubles as a gallery.

In Vino Veritas Burggasse. Relaxed, elegant bar with outdoor seating in one of central Klagenfurt's leafy courtyards, with occasional live music on summer weekends.

Kamot Bahnhofstr 9. Cool jazz bar two blocks east of Neuer Platz in a cellar divided up into four rooms, with live music at weekends. Good place for a drink whether you're a member of the black turtleneck crowd or not.

Molly Malones Theatergasse 7. Roomy pub that works well as both an animated boozing venue and a quiet place for an intimate drink, depending on where you decide to perch. Decent food, including fair-sized portions of ribs.

Pankraz 8 Mai-Str 16. Largish café-bar, chicly decorated in modern minimalist style and playing vaguely alternative music, that's a magnet for trendy young things.

Segafredo Alter Platz. Popular because of its location more than anything else, this modern café-bar has plenty of outdoor seating on the pedestrianized central thoroughfare. It's a nice place for a drink by day or night – the cakes and ice creams are good, too.

VIP Domgasse. Trendy bar with a dressy clientele and slightly higher prices than elsewhere. A good place to sip prosecco and enjoy piped cocktail-bar sounds.

Listings

Airport Flughafen Annabichl, 3km northeast of town. Bus #40 runs from the train station and Heiligengeistplatz to Annabichl train station, from where bus #45 links to the airport. Information ⓣ0463/41500, ⓦwww.klagenfurt-airport.at.

Bike rental At the tourist office (same hours; from €10 per day).

Car rental Avis, Villacherstr 1c, and at the airport ⓣ0463/55938; Budget, at the airport ⓣ0463/428244; Europcar, at the airport ⓣ0463/21525; Hertz, St Ruprechtstr 12 ⓣ0463/41500.

Cinemas The Wulfenia, Luegerstr 5 (ⓣ0463/22288), and Cinecity, Heidemarie-Hatheyer Platz 1 (ⓣ0463/353570), are both modern multi-screen cinemas with first-run Hollywood films (usually dubbed in German),while the smaller Volkskino, Kinoplatz 3 (ⓣ0463/319880), shows art-house choices, often in the original language.

Hospital Klagenfurter Krankenhaus, St-Veiter-Str 47 ⓣ0463/5380.

Markets Benedikinermarkt, Benediktinerplatz. Farmers' produce every Thurs & Sat (mornings only).

Pharmacies Most central are the Adler Apotheke, Neuer Platz 9, and the Lendorf Apotheke, Seltenheimerstr 2. Signs in pharmacy windows give names and addresses of duty pharmacies, which open on a rota basis.

Police St Ruprechter Str 3 ⓣ0463/5333-0.

Post office The main post office (Mon–Fri 7.30am–6pm, Sat 7.30–11am) is at Pernhartgasse 7. The post office next to the train station at Bahnhofplatz 5 has longer hours (Mon–Fri 7.30am–9.30pm, Sat 8am–1pm, Sun 2–9pm).

Sailing Kärntner Yachtsportschule, Villacherstr 1a, on the lakefront (ⓣ0463/511111), offers boat hire and tuition.

Swimming pools Erlebnis Hallenbad, on the corner of Gabelsbergerstr and Lastenstr, has water slides, whirlpools and children's areas. Open Sept–June.

Train and bus information ⓣ05/1717.

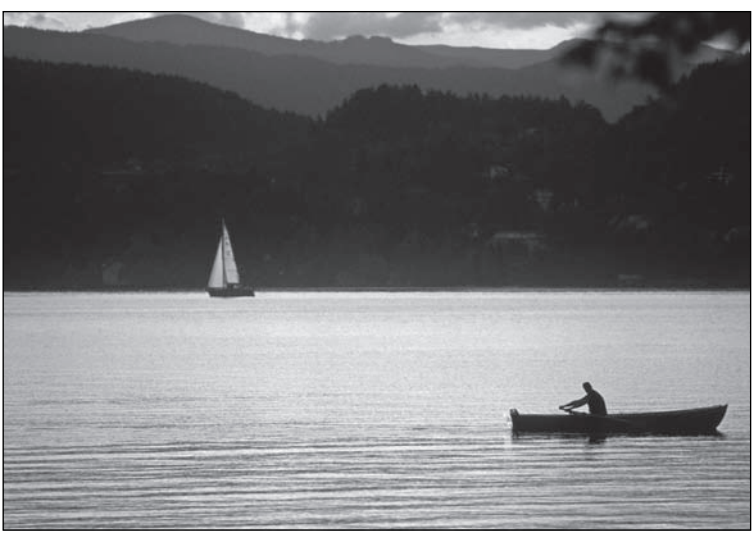
Travel agent Kärntner Reisebüro, Neuer Platz 2 ⓣ0463/56400.

Windsurfing Kärntner Yachtsportschule (see "Sailing" above). Board hire and a range of courses.

Around Wörthersee

Both a lively summer playground and sedate retreat for affluent oldies, **Wörthersee** stretches west from Klagenfurt for 20km, squeezed between low hills with the Karawanken Alps a distant backdrop to the south. The lake has long been regarded as a relaxed, small-scale Austrian version of the French Riviera, a status that dates back to the 1860s when the region was first linked to Vienna by rail. It soon became the favoured vacation spot for Vienna-based businessmen and industrialists, many of whom embarked on the construction of lakeside holiday villas. Playfully embellished with spires, balustrades and oriel windows, these villas lend the region an elegant, nineteenth-century character. After World War II Wörthersee resorts were frequently used as locations in the romantic comedies churned out by the Austrian and German film industries. Actors, playboys and hangers-on descended on the area in large numbers, giving it a reputation for glamour and exclusivity that still lives on – in the minds of local Carinthians, if not always in real life. Today's Wörthersee offers a charming slice of sedate lakeside relaxation mixed with brash modern hedonism – a combination that few other waterside locations in Austria can match. The lake is at its best from spring through to early autumn: outside these times, visitor numbers dwindle to almost nothing, and many hotels and restaurants close their doors.

Klagenfurt commands the eastern approaches to the lake, but lacks the high-society reputation enjoyed by Wörthersee's other main centres – **Velden** on the western shore, and **Pörtschach** to the north. Both of these have a better choice of daytime activities and night-time diversions, but they're also two of the most expensive lakeside resorts in the country. Standing in the shadow of the wooded hill known as the **Pyramidenkogel**, settlements on the **southern shore** of the lake receive slightly less sun, and are that bit less fashionable as a result. **Maria Wörth**, with its attractive lakeside churches, is the most pleasing town on this part of the lake.



▲ Wörthersee

Each of the resorts has an attractive waterside esplanade of one sort or another; elsewhere most of the shore is private property, so public rights of way enabling you to walk or cycle along the lakefront, or simply stop off for a spot of sunbathing, are few and far between. Many hotels have access to small stretches of the lakefront where guests are allowed to bathe, however, and there are numerous municipal or privately owned **Strandbäder** where you can loll around on the grass or swim in the lake on payment of a fee. As a general rule, **cycling** is best on the north side, where there are more opportunities for getting off the busy main road and onto specific cycle- and pedestrian-only paths. **Water-based activities** such as windsurfing and sailing are easily arranged.

Getting around the lake by boat is no problem in season, which usually runs from the first week in May to the beginning of October. **Boats** run from Klagenfurt to Velden and back, calling at intermediate points on both sides of the lake, five times a day at the beginning and the end of the season, rising to eight times a day in July and August. Compared to buses and trains, boat travel is pricey (for example, Klagenfurt–Velden costs €10 single, €13.50 return; Klagenfurt–Pörtschach costs €6 single, €9 return, day tickets cost €14.50), but it can be the easiest way to get from one side of the lake to the other.

Pörtschach

Situated midway between Klagenfurt and Velden on the northern shore of the lake, **PÖRTSCHACH** is traditionally Wörthersee's most exclusive resort. But while prices here are higher than anywhere else in Carinthia, the resort caters for a wide range of ages and tastes. Whether you're looking for a night of bar-hopping or a slow stroll along the lakefront, it's an invigorating place to be. There's not a lot to the town itself save for a main road, the shop- and café-lined Hauptstrasse, which runs through the town from east to west. Immediately south of here, a small peninsula juts out into the lake, where a promenade along the water's edge is lined with terrace cafés and kiosks offering boat hire and windsurfing. At the tip of the peninsula, beyond the highrise *Hotel Park*, you'll find the landing stage for Wörthersee passenger boats, and a large Strandbad (daily: May, June & Sept 9am–7pm; July & Aug 9am–8pm; €5) occupying a partly wooded offshore island accessible by footbridge.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Pörtschach's **train station** is a few steps north of the Hauptstrasse: walk down the access road from the station and you'll see the **tourist office** diagonally opposite to the left at Hauptstrasse 153 (May & Sept Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 10am–2pm; June–Aug Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 10am–6pm, Sun 10am–4pm; Oct–April Mon–Thurs 7.30am–4pm, Fri 7.30am–1pm; ⓣ0810/9770 85, ⓦwww.poertschach.at), where you can pick up a town map and addresses of sporting facilities, and book **accommodation**. Bear in mind you don't come to Pörtschach to save money; as a general rule, any hotel near the water will be expensive, and a room with a lake view extortionate. There are plenty of comfortable mid-priced pensions, however, in the residential streets north of the railway tracks, with prices falling the further east you go. **Private rooms** start at about ❷, although families and people travelling in groups will find **apartments** (stays of more than three days preferred) a cheaper option – details are available from the tourist office.

Of the **hotels**, *Haus Silvia*, Goritschacherweg 35 (ⓣ04272/3102, ⓦwww.haus-silvia.com; ❹; April–Sept only), on a hillside 1.5km east of town, has utilitarian en suites, most with balconies and TV, in a chalet-style house; while *Frühstückspension Iris*, ten minutes' walk east of the centre at Mühlweg 36

(T 04272/3498, E pens.iris@aon.at; 3; May–Sept only), has adequate doubles with en-suite facilities, some with balconies facing the lake. *Villa Auguste*, Augustenstr 12 (mid-May to mid-Oct; T 04272/2272, W www.villa-auguste.at; 4), is a plain building bang in the centre of town, 100m from the lake, with functional but fully equipped rooms. Most reasonable of the major lakefront hotels is the *Prüller*, Annastr 33–35 (T 04272/2353-0, W www.prueller.at; winter 7; summer 9), is a well-appointed lakefront hotel with its own bathing area, free rowing boat and bike hire, and modern rooms with en-suite facilities and TV.

Eating and drinking

Despite Pörtschach's stylish reputation, places to **eat** are on the whole fairly uniform. All the hotels along the lakefront have restaurants with outdoor terraces, most of which offer a range of standard Austrian cuisine, together with local fish, at a reasonable (though hardly budget) price. The restaurant of the *Strandhotel Prüller*, Annastr 33–35, is as reasonable as any. *Fallaloon*, at the western end of the Hauptstrasse, serves up Chinese meals and Japanese sushi dishes that won't break the bank, while the *Glocknerhof*, Hauptstr 163, covers the classic Austrian meat-and-two-veg repertoire and also serves serviceable pizzas. The upmarket and undoubtedly atmospheric *Schloss Leonstain*, Hauptstr 228, is the place to splash out on fresh fish and fine wines, and has outdoor seating in an arcaded courtyard. *Konditorei Wieneroither*, on the Hauptstrasse about 50m east of the tourist office, is the best place for buying pastries and cakes.

Most **nightlife** revolves around the smallish **Monte-Carlo-Platz**, halfway along the Hauptstrasse, which becomes one vast open-air bar at the height of summer. The busy *Luna's Szenebar* has a reputation for attracting the dressed-up crowd, with *America Bar* just over the road offering a slightly more relaxed alternative. *Anna W*, just west of here at Hauptstr 218, has a slightly younger clientele, but still attracts the beautiful people. One of the coolest **clubbing** venues on the lake is *Fabrik* (W www.fabrik.at), a five-kilometre taxi ride west of Pörtschach in the tiny village of **Saag**, although it's not open every weekend. Check with the tourist office or online to find out what they're putting on.

Velden

Hugging the bay at the western end of the lake, brash and bustling **VELDEN** is larger and more crowded than Pörtschach, and less attractive as a result. It's another place where sybaritic youth mingle with strolling pensioners and sightseeing coach parties. Most visitors gravitate at some stage towards the central **Europaplatz**, where Velden's casino provides the fulcrum of the town's social life. The casino was opened in 1989, its spire-like protrusions making it something of a landmark. From Europaplatz, Am Corso leads south towards the transport hub of Karawankenplatz, from where Seecorso leads round the lake. Overlooking Seecorso is the **Schloss**, a distinctive egg-yolk-coloured structure which is close to the hearts of many Austrians and Germans, having served as the backdrop to a popular 1990s television series, *Schloss am Wörthersee*. Armies of teutonic soap fans continue to gravitate here, photographing each other outside the Schloss's portals. Built for leading Carinthian magnate Bartholomäus von Khevenhüller in 1590, it is now a luxury hotel.

Arrival, information and accommodation

From Velden's **train station**, walk downhill along Bahnhofstrasse, turn right into Klagenfurterstrasse and keep going to reach the central ribbon of Europaplatz, Am Corso and Karawankenplatz. **Buses** from Klagenfurt and Villach pick up and

drop off at Villacherstrasse, a five-minute walk west of Karawankenplatz. The **tourist office**, Villacherstr 5 (July & Aug Mon–Thurs 8am–8pm, Fri & Sat 8am–10pm, Sun 9am–5pm; April–June & Sept Mon–Thurs 8am–6pm, Fri & Sat 8am–8pm, Sun 9am–5pm; Oct–March Mon–Sat 8am–5pm; ⓣ04274/2103, ⓦwww.velden.at), has lists of **private rooms** (2) and holiday **apartments** (the latter only really open to those contemplating a stay of four or more days) in Velden and surrounding villages, but you might have to ring up the places yourself. The nearest **campsite** is the *Weisses Rössl* at Auen (see p.332), accessible on Velden–Maria Wörth–Klagenfurt buses.

The *Cap Wörth* **hostel**, 3km southeast of the centre at Seecorso 37–39 (ⓣ04274/2646, ⓔcapwoerth@woerthersee.com; €25 per person) offers a mixed bag of doubles, triples and five-bed dorms, own stretch of lakefront and a small indoor pool, although it soon fills up in season. Among the best of the local **pensions** are *Gästehaus Teppan*, Sternbergstr 7 (Easter–Sept; ⓣ04274/3169, ⓦwww.pension-teppan.at; 3), a trad-style house with small balconied rooms just uphill from Villacherstrasse, the main road westwards out of town, and the *Frühstückspension Urania* at Mühlweg 2 (April–Oct; ⓣ04274/2696; 4), a residential street southwest of the centre and only minutes from the lake. One of the nicest **hotels** on the lakefront is *Seehaus Ogris*, Seecorso 34 (May–Oct; ⓣ04274/2079, ⓦwww.ogris-velden.at; 5), a well-run family hotel with en-suite facilites, TVs, sun balcony and own Strandbad across the street. Moving up slightly in price, the characterful *Mösslacherhaus*, Karawankenplatz 1 (ⓣ04274/2020; 7), is a delightful cross between central European villa and English country house, offering rooms with en-suite facilities and TV, and use of a private Strandbad a few steps away. If money is no object, then *Schloss Velden*, Schlosspark 1 (ⓣ04274/52000, ⓦwww.schlossveldencapella.com; 9) offers ornate, high-ceilinged doubles in the Schloss itself, or smart modern suites in the contemporary annex to the rear. The hotel spa centre is the place to pamper yourself with beauty treatments, saunas and steam baths.

Eating and drinking

Good, cheap Austrian **food** is thin on the ground in Velden, but there's a growing range of ethnic restaurants to fill the gap. Among the most popular are *Fallaloon*, Am Corso 2a, a passable Chinese restaurant with a large, reasonably priced menu and outdoor seating in a big courtyard, and *Pizzeria da Leopoldo*, Seecorso 18, a chic place that stays open beyond midnight. For good-quality Austrian fare and the best in Carinthian *Nud'l* dishes try the trad-style *Gasthof Alte Post*, Europaplatz 4–6. *Seespitz*, Schlosspark, is a chic timber and glass pavilion on the lakefront that serves upmarket Austrian standards alongside steaks and fish, with mains clocking in at €25.

Most **drinking** revolves around Europaplatz, where the outdoor tables of the Casino's own café vie for custom with a string of near-neighbours: the *American Bar* (also known as *Schinakel*), Am Corso 10, is a society hangout of long standing that never goes out of fashion; while the cosy and intimate *Stamperl*, Am Corso 8, pulls in its fair share of local celebrities in season. The *Do & Ga Stehbar*, a little further west underneath the Volksbank, is a brasher, more youthful bar with regular live bands, while *Monkey Circus*, on the corner of Klagenfurterstrasse and Bahnhofstrasse, has Mexican beers alongside ribs- and wings-style nibbles. *Le Cabaret*, in the casino building, is the place to find mainstream club music and a dance-till-dawn crowd. If you fancy trying your luck in the Casino itself, it is open from 3pm until the early hours and dress requirements are smart casual.

Schloss Rosegg and the Wildpark

You can walk, cycle or catch a bus to the village of **ROSEGG**, 4km southwest of Velden, site of a Neoclassical **Schloss** (more of a country villa than a castle) built by Habsburg diplomat Graf Orsini-Rosenberg in 1770 for his Italian mistress Lucrezia – and currently owned by the Liechtenstein family. It's visited for the linden-lined avenues of its landscaped **park** (dawn–dusk; free), and the **Figurenkabinett Madame Lucrezia** (May to early Oct: Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; July & Aug also open Mon; €6; combined ticket with Wildpark €12; combined ticket with Wildpark and Labyrinth €15), where the wax figures of Orsini-Rosenberg and his paramour mingle with other historical personages – including a portly Napoleon. If the weather's fine, your time would be better spent among the deer and goats of **Wildpark Rosegg** (April–Nov daily 9am–5pm; July & Aug open till 6pm; €7.50), a short walk south of the Schloss, or exploring the **Labyrinth** that lies between the two (May–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; July & Aug also open Mon; €4).

The southern shore

Five daily Klagenfurt–Velden buses speed along the Wörthersee Süduferstrasse, which runs from Klagenfurt to Velden along the **southern shore** of the lake, where a string of attractive if rather low-key settlements nestle beneath the wooded foothills of the Pyramidenkogel.

Ten kilometres west of Klagenfurt, **REIFNITZ** is the first place of any size, a quiet town with a municipal Strandbad and couple of café-restaurants on the lakefront. From the centre of Reifnitz a road heads south then west towards the summit of the 850-metre **Pyramidenkogel**, 7km distant and topped by a futuristic **viewing tower** (daily: April & Oct 10am–6pm; May & Sept 9am–7pm; June 9am–8pm; July & Aug 9am–9pm; €6), where you can patronize the expensive café and savour a sweeping panorama of the Carinthian countryside. There are well-signposted **paths** up to the Pyramidenkogel from either Reifnitz or Maria Wörth; the steep ascent through the forest takes a couple of hours. There's also one direct **bus** on Tuesdays and Thursdays (mid-July to early Sept) from Klagenfurt to the Pyramidenkogel, passing through Reifnitz on the way.

Maria Wörth and beyond

Four kilometres west of Reifnitz, and accessible on foot along the main road, the hotels and holiday apartments of **MARIA WÖRTH** crowd onto a promontory jutting into the lake, presided over in picturesque fashion by the spires of two medieval chapels. The larger of the two, at the eastern end of the promontory, is the twelfth-century **Pfarrkirche SS Primus und Felician**. The two early Christian martyrs are portrayed on either side (Primus on the left) of the *Virgin and Child* which graces the Baroque high altar. On the south wall of the nave, a late-Gothic altar panel shows St Jerome (Hieronymus), the patron saint of translators and librarians. On a knoll opposite, the **Winterkirche**, whose inside walls bear traces of twelfth-century frescoes depicting the Apostles, holds a striking stained-glass window showing the Madonna, behind the altar.

Maria Wörth's **tourist office**, just inland at Seepromenade 5 (May & Oct Mon–Fri 10am–noon & 1–4.30pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 2–4.30pm; June & Sept Mon–Fri 10am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 2–5pm; July & Aug daily 9am–6pm; ⓣ04273/22400, ⓦwww.maria-woerth.at) will book accommodation both in the village and nearby Reifnitz. Maria Wörth is too small to have a stock of private rooms, but the village's **pensions** tend to offer better value than those in Pörtschach on the opposite side of the lake. *Pension*

Gabriele (☎04273/2572, ⓦwww.gasthof-pension-gabriele.at; ❹), Primusweg 2, has spacious rooms, a stretch of Strandbad, and is open all year; while the nearby *Hotel Pension Jutta*, Primusweg 7 (May–Sept only; ☎04273/2567, ⓦwww.hotel-jutta.at; ❺) offers a bit more in the plushness stakes, and has an indoor pool and bikes for rent.

West of Maria Wörth, the Velden-bound road passes through the straggling settlements of **DELLACH** and **AUEN**. Dellach stands beside one of Carinthia's best eighteen-hole **golf courses** (it's a scenic course, too, on high ground with views back towards the lake), and most of the hotels in the village do a profitable line in golf packages from March to October – the Maria Wörth tourist office has details. Immediately beyond Dellach, Auen is the site of the southern shore's best **campsite**, *Camping Weisses Rössl* (☎04274/2898, ⓔweisses.roessl@aon.at), on a hillside above the lake and with free access to its own Strandbad.

North of Klagenfurt

The area **north of Klagenfurt** is the historic heartland of Carinthia. Successive waves of immigrant cultures – Celtic, Roman, Slav and finally Bavarian – moved in to stamp their identity on the fertile basin around the Glan and Gurk rivers, leaving the territory laden with historic remains: the Celts settled the hummocks around the Zollfeld, where the remnants of a Celtic town lie on the slopes of the **Magdalensberg**. The Romans followed, building the now-vanished city of **Virunum**, in the valley below. Stones from Virunum were used to build the pilgrimage church at **Maria Saal**, 10km north of Klagenfurt, once an important religious centre and now the site of the Carinthian Open-Air Museum. North of Maria Saal lies the rather more substantial market town of **St Veit an der Glan**, former capital of Carinthia, and a good base from which to visit **Hochosterwitz Castle**, a startlingly attractive hilltop fortress, while the main northbound route continues onwards to **Friesach**, one of Austria's best-preserved small medieval towns. Lying slightly off the main north–south route are **Gurk** to the west, site of the province's most impressive cathedral, and **Hüttenberg** to the east, a former mining town that now harbours an intriguing ethnographic museum honouring local-born explorer Heinrich Harrer.

All of the above can be treated as day-trips from Klagenfurt. The main Vienna-bound rail line and Bundesstrasse 83 provide access to the area, striking north through the **Zollfeld** just beyond the Klagenfurt city limits, an area of rich corn-bearing farmland bordered by conifer-covered hills. If you're dependent on public transport, you'll find Maria Saal, St Veit, Hochosterwitz and Friesach fairly easy to get to, as they're all served by frequent **trains**. Less frequent **buses** run to Gurk and Hüttenberg, while Magdalensberg can only practically be reached with your own transport, or by taxi.

Maria Saal

Back in the eighth century, when pagan Carinthia was a land of opportunity for any ambitious, evangelizing cleric, the great Bishop (and later St) Virgil of Salzburg dispatched the monk Modestus to the Zollfeld to lead the conversion – and Germanization – of the local Slavs. Modestus chose the hillock now occupied by the village of **MARIA SAAL** as his base, and this sleepy, rustic spot still revolves around the hilltop church he founded.

Arriving at Maria Saal's small **train station**, you can clearly see the famous **Wallfahrtskirche** on the high ground 500m to the east. A fifteenth-century

structure built atop St Modestus's original foundation, the church is notable for the Roman gravestones pilfered from the ruins of nearby Virunum and built into its outer walls, especially around the south porch. Among the most expressive of these are one showing two horses pulling a wagon, and another showing a she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus (the latter embedded inside the porch). Within the impressively lattice-vaulted interior, the high altar containing statuettes of the Madonna and Child serves as the main focus for pilgrims, although significantly more engaging is the Arndorfer altar in the northern apse, showing the *Coronation of the Virgin*, flanked by SS George and Florian. Outside the church, an octagonal charnel house features two storeys of arcading, the lower storey bearing medieval frescoes showing the Deposition.

Arndorferstrasse leads downhill northeast from the church towards a T-junction presided over by the **Pestkreuz**, a sixteenth-century wayside cross. A short walk west of here is the **Freilichtmuseum** (May to mid-Oct Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, last admittance 5pm; €5; Ⓦwww.freilichtmuseum-mariasaal.at), occupying an attractive, partly wooded site on the edge of town and containing more than thirty farmsteads and other buildings collected from all over Carinthia. A German-language guidebook (€4) gives the full rundown, but an obvious highlight is the waterwheel-operated sawmill complex in a dell to the west. Above the sawmill is the humble *Holzknechthütte*, the improvised shelter with tree-bark roof in which the woodcutters dwelt while away working in the forest.

Enclosed by railings 1.5km north of Maria Saal, beside the old road to St Veit (which runs parallel to the modern Bundesstr), the **Herzogstuhl** is a granite throne about 2m high, assembled from bits of Roman-era masonry from much-plundered Virunum. Dating from the ninth century, it was used in ceremonies to confirm the authority of the dukes of Carinthia over the local populace. The venerable seat is not much to look at, but exudes a powerful whiff of history nevertheless. It's easily reached by car, and buses on the Klagenfurt–Maria Saal–St Veit run stop just next to it. If you're on foot, there's a path which leads from the Freilichtmuseum to the Herzogstuhl in about 15 minutes, passing underneath the railway line on the way; otherwise, simply turn north outside Maria Saal train station and keep going.

Practicalities

Local trains stop in Maria Saal, as well as a few of the expresses, and it's also on the Klagenfurt–St Veit bus route. The **tourist office**, just downhill from the church at Am Platzl 7 (Mon–Fri 7am–12.30pm; ⓉⓉ04223/2214, Ⓦwww.mariasaal.at), can fix you up with one of a small number of **private rooms** (2). Two decent local **pensions** are *Haus Plieschnegger*, a large modern house just uphill from the village centre at Böcklstr 5 (ⓉⓉ04223/2293; 3); and *Haus Brenner*, on the northwestern fringes of the village at Schnerichweg 11 (ⓉⓉ04223/2483; 3). *Gasthof Sandwirt*, on the Hauptplatz next to the church, offers top-quality Austrian **food**. For a quick lunch, *Jausenstazion Rauter*, just outside the entrance to the Freilichtmuseum, offers a range of wurst and cold cuts.

The Magdalensberg

Ten kilometres north of Maria Saal, a minor road leaves the main northbound route near the village of **St Michael am Zollfeld** to snake its way up to the summit of the 1059-metre **Magdalensberg** to the east. The hilltop is now occupied by the **Wallfahrtskirche SS Helena and Magdalena**, a late-Gothic affair with some intricate stellar vaulting inside and a high altar whose panels tell the story of Helena's discovery of the Holy Cross and its re-erection by Emperor Heraclius. The church is the starting point of the annual *Vierbergelauf*,

or "Four Mountains Walk", which takes place on the second Friday after Easter. Up to 5000 people attend midnight Mass on the Magdalensberg before embarking on a torchlit hike that takes in three hills on the other side of the valley – the Ulrichsberg, Veitsberg and Lorenziberg.

Such rituals have their origins deep in the Celtic past, when spiritual life often centred on the area's hilltop shrines. The strength of Celtic culture in the area is evinced by the remains of a **Romano-Celtic town** 1.5km below the summit of the Magdalensberg, by the side of the road up to the summit. The site (May–Oct daily 9am–7pm; €5) is arranged on terraced slopes around a central grassy area that once served as a forum. The Celts who settled the area in the first century BC grew rich from the gold, amber and iron found in the nearby hills, and axe heads and horse bits are proudly displayed in cabinets in the former trade and residential quarter, to the right of the forum. A Roman takeover took place early in the first century AD, and it's thought that the settlement here served as Roman regional capital before the city of Virunum was constructed in the valley below. Indeed, many of the finer remains here were built under Roman stewardship: the **painted house** to the right of the forum bears a cycle of pictures relating to Dionysus – the use of the "Pompeii red" pigment suggests that it was executed by a craftsman who learnt his trade in the Italian south. On the other side of the forum, the reconstructed **council chamber** (where leaders of local Celtic tribes were summoned to assemblies) now holds a display of both Celtic and Roman jewellery and the *Jungling von Magdalensberg* (*Young Man of Magdalensberg*), a copy of a statue unearthed by farmers here in the Middle Ages, which was sent to Spain in the sixteenth century, and promptly lost – our knowledge of the statue comes from a seventeenth-century replica now housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Trips to the Magdalensberg are easiest by car; the only buses running to the site leave Klagenfurt around 6am in the morning and return late at night, and don't run at all during school holidays.

St Veit an der Glan

Standing at the northern end of the Zollfeld, the peaceful market town of **ST VEIT AN DER GLAN** bears little evidence that it served as the capital of Carinthia until 1518. Generously sprinkled with medieval and Baroque town houses, and preserving portions of its medieval town walls, it's riddled with picturesque corners and serves as a good place for a brief stop on your way to Magdalensberg or Hochosterwitz (see opposite). The town comes to life during the last week of September, when the **Wiesenmarkt**, a medieval-style fair featuring street entertainment and a bewildering array of stalls, pulls in as many as 500,000 visitors. Both the Wiesenmarkt and the *Pfingsten* (Whitsun) holiday are celebrated with marching displays by the **Trabanten**, a kind of honorary home guard comprised of local citizens who parade through town in antiquated uniforms.

Your best approach is to head for the elongated, rectangular **Hauptplatz** and indulge in a relaxed amble around the largely pedestrianized network of alleyways and courtyards around it. The **Pfarrkirche St Veit** at the northern end of the square is worth popping into for a glimpse of the colourful high altar (1752) by local master Johann Pacher, which features gilded figures of the Virgin flanked by SS Dominicus and Clara. The other end of the Hauptplatz is overlooked by the fine Baroque facade of the **Rathaus**, behind which lies an attractive arcaded courtyard (now covered with a modern glass roof), decorated with *sgraffito* dragon, snake and bird designs. Next door, the **Museum St Veit**, Hauptplatz 29 (April–Oct: daily 9am–noon & 2–6pm; €3), offers an engaging

blend of transport and Stadtmuseum. The lower floors contain a wealth of train and transport memorabilia, including a train simulator which the kids will love, a collection of railway uniforms, and antiquated ticket machines. The top floor contains ceramics, furnishings, old shooting targets and the comely black-and-gold costumes of the Goldhaubenfrauen ("Women in Golden Hats"), a nineteenth-century guild of local women who undertook charitable works. Finally, standing guard at the northern end of the town's main strip is the unabashedly garish **Fuchs Palast**, a feast of clashing colours designed by Ernst Fuchs, a painter and architect with a fondness for frivolous toy-town architecture. The hotel, finished in 1999, is considered to be his masterpiece, although the neo-Egyptian facade has to be seen to be believed, and goodness knows what inspired the cluster of egg-like forms that appear to be blasting off into outer space just above the central lobby.

Practicalities

Buses and trains both stop at the **train station** at the northern end of town. From there, turn left onto the main road and walk straight for ten minutes before bearing right into the old town. The **tourist office**, Hauptplatz (Mon–Sat 8am–6pm; ⓣ04212/5555-31, ⓦwww.sv.or.at), has a limited list of private rooms (2) in town. Of the local **hotels**, the *Weisses Lamm*, Unterer Platz 4 (ⓣ04212/2362; 4), is a traditional town-centre *Gasthof* with cosy rooms with en-suite facilties and a nice restaurant in the courtyard. *Hotel Mosser*, just off the Hauptplatz at Spitalgasse 6 (ⓣ04212/3223, ⓦwww.suppenkasper.at; 4), is a snug fifteen-room place with chintzy en suites. You'll be pleased to know that room interiors at the plush, four-star *Fuchs Palast*, Ernst-Fuchs-Platz 1 (ⓣ04212/4660-0, ⓦwww.fuchspalast.com; 7), are much more tasteful and restrained than the hotel's wacky facade.

Those in search of **eating** and drinking venues shouldn't have to stray too far from the Hauptplatz and vicinity. The *Rathauscafé*, Hauptplatz 31, is a pleasant place for inexpensive pizza- or pasta-based lunches, while the nearby *Suppenkasper*, at the Hotel Mosser, serves traditional *Gasthof* food of the Wiener Schnitzel and Tafelspitz variety in modern, white-walled, non-*Gasthof* surroundings. Top-quality Carinthian fare is the order of the day at the slightly more upmarket *Puckelsheim*, Erlgasse 11. *Cantina Toscana*, Klagenfurterstrasse, has a big garden, Sicilian staff and a good reputation for authentic Italian food.

For **drinking**, *Bieradies*, Hauptplatz 24, is a long, narrow bar with ten varieties of beer on tap, a youngish clientele and cheap lunchtime meals; while *Kings*, down an alleyway off the Hauptplatz, is a chic glass box of a bar offering a wide range of shots and cocktails.

Burg Hochosterwitz and around

North of St Veit, Bundestrasse 83 cuts through low hills before descending to trace the course of the River Gurk. The railway ultimately follows the same route after initially veering east to pass within striking range of the region's most awe-inspiring sight, the hilltop fortress of **Burg Hochosterwitz**. Situated 10km east of St Veit, though clearly visible long before you arrive, the fortress sits fairy-tale-like on the rock (it's one of several European citadels claiming to be the inspiration behind the castle in Disney's *Snow White*), its turret-encrusted outer fortifications winding their way around the craggy slopes. This spot has been fortified since the early Middle Ages, but the current castle was largely the work of the governor of Carinthia, Georg von Khevenhüller, who purchased the site in 1571 and whose bust adorns the sixth gate on the approach to the fortress. Picturesque though the effect, his construction efforts had a serious

purpose – the lowlands around St Veit and Klagenfurt were constantly under threat of Turkish raids at the time. Hochosterwitz still belongs to the Khevenhüllers, whose current head lives in a house in the valley below.

The **fortress** (daily: March, April & Oct 9am–5pm; May–Sept 8am–6pm; €8; ⓦ www.burg-hochosterwitz.or.at) is approached via a pathway that ascends through fourteen fortified **gates**, which once controlled access to Hochosterwitz's impregnable inner sanctum. Many of the gates are decorated with impressive busts and reliefs; the first, the **Fähnrichtor** (Ensign's Gate), bears the arms of the Khevenhüllers – featuring an acorn, symbol of the family's original fifteenth-century residence near Villach, Eichelberg (Acorn Hill) – together with the child Jesus with a lamb. The inner fortress at the top of the hill is a bit of a disappointment; there's not much, save for a café in the central courtyard and a patchy **museum**, inadequately labelled in German. Amongst the old weapons and family portraits lining the walls is a piece of paper bearing the signature of King James I of England – it's an entry taken from Hans von Khevenhüller's *Stammbuch*, the kind of diary-cum-album in which aristocrats of the day kept records of the dignitaries they'd met in the course of their travels.

There's a lift up to the fortress for those who don't fancy the climb, but be sure to take the path on the way down, otherwise you'll miss all the gates. Lift tokens (€5) are available from the castle ticket office beneath the first gate.

Practicalities

Hochosterwitz lies 2km south of the village of **Launsdorf**, on the Klagenfurt–Vienna rail route (all trains except inter-city ones stop here): turn right outside the **train station** and keep going – you'll soon see the fortress. Those with their own transport should follow Bundesstr 82, which leaves Bundesstr 83 at St Veit and heads east towards Brückl; a well-signposted turn leads to the fortress, which is a further 1km off the road. St Veit–Brückl buses pick up and drop off at this turn-off.

As for **eating and drinking**, *Gasthaus Tatzer* next to the castle car park offers solid Austrian cuisine and good-value Tagesmenüs from around €8. Otherwise, it's best to eat in Launsdorf, where *Gasthof zur Post*, just opposite the train station on the Hauptstrasse, produces decent if uninspiring Austrian and Carinthian dishes. For those with a car, *Gasthof Prettner*, Zollfeldstr 3, in the village of **St Donat** (6km southwest of Hochosterwitz on the road back towards Klagenfurt), is one of the best local venues for good Carinthian cooking at a moderate price.

Should you wish **to stay** near the castle, the *Dienstlgut*, 4km east of Hochosterwitz in the village of Wiendorf (ⓣ 04213/2140, ⓦ www.dienstlgut.com; ❽) is one of Carinthia's cosiest rural hotels, with a handful of plush doubles in a farmhouse surrounded by grazing horses – riding lessons and gallops can be arranged.

Gurk

Twenty kilometres north of St Veit, at Pöckstein, a secondary road (traversed by two daily Klagenfurt-Weitensfeld buses) leaves Bundesstr 83 to explore the **Gurktal** to the west, a narrow ribbon of pastureland squeezed between the pine-carpeted hills of the Gurktaler Alpen. Fifteen kilometres up the valley, the dainty farming village of **GURK** is dominated by the imposing twin towers of its stately Romanesque cathedral. It's been an ecclesiastical focal point ever since Carinthian noblewoman Hemma of Gurk established a Benedictine convent here in 1043. Gurk was the last of a long line of churches and abbeys founded by this extraordinarily energetic and pious woman, and her tomb here

▲ Gurk

quickly became an object of veneration for pilgrims. Hemma's convent was soon taken over by the archbishops of Salzburg, who were eager to consolidate their control over a region whose conversion to Christianity they had overseen. Gurk was upgraded to become a bishopric, necessitating the construction of a new cathedral to replace Hemma's church, and Bishop Roman I (1131–67) set about building a wondrous edifice that survives more or less intact today. Located in a side-valley some distance from the main north–south trade routes, however, Gurk's status as spiritual capital of Carinthia was something of an anomaly. In 1787 Bishop Salm relocated the episcopal court to Klagenfurt, and the village of Gurk settled back into rural slumber. Gurk is not really geared up for tourist accommodation,although the information desk in the cathedral itself may be able to help fix you up with a private room (☎04266/8236; same hours as cathedral, see below). There's also a **tourist office** of sorts in the centre of the village in the same building as the post office (Mon–Thurs 7am–noon & 1–4pm, Fri 7am–noon; ☎04266/8125). *Gästehaus St Hemma* (☎04266/8236-14, Ⓦwww.dom-zu-gurk.at; 3) in the cathedral complex has clean sunny doubles and dorm beds (€18), while the *Kronenwirt*, just outside the cathedral's west gate, is a good place to pick up a hearty Austrian lunch.

The Dom

Despite later additions, notably the seventeenth-century onion domes that now grace the two towers, the **Dom** (daily: April–Sept 9am–5pm; Oct–March 10am–4pm; Ⓦwww.dom-zu-gurk.at; Mass Mon–Sat 6pm, Sun 8.30am & 10am) is still essentially the same three-aisled basilica that was built by Bavarian masons between 1140 and 1200. Constructed from local iron-bearing limestone, the whole building exudes a curious, golden-yellow luminescence. Before venturing inside, it's worth wandering round to look at the tympanum above the south porch, which bears a figure of Christ, carved around 1150, holding aloft a book whose pages are inscribed with the words *ego sum hostium* – "I am the gate".

Entering the cathedral via the west door, you come face to face with thirteenth-century frescoes in the porch, showing scenes from Genesis on the left-hand side, and New Testament scenes on the right. From here an imposing Romanesque doorway leads to the nave, where your eyes are drawn towards George Raphael

Donner's **cross altar** of 1740, halfway up the nave, which features an expressive *Pietà* cast in lead. To the left of the altar, in the north aisle, the celebrated Romanesque **Samson tympanum** (1200) bears a relief of the biblical strongman breaking the jaws of a lion. At the east end of the cathedral, Michael Hönel's **high altar** (1626–32) shows the Ascension of the Virgin surrounded by an array of highly stylized statuettes – St Hemma kneels above the Virgin's head to the right. During Lent the high altar is covered by what amounts to an enormous painted curtain, the **Gurker Fastentuch**, or Gurk Lenten cloth, executed by Konrad von Friesach in 1458, and featuring 99 biblical scenes. During the rest of the year it is accessible by guided tour (€2.90), and pictures of it are always on display in the cathedral. In the **crypt**, a shrine to St Hemma, flanked by eighteenth-century statues, has been built above the eleventh-century sarcophagus. In the southeast corner of the crypt you'll find a rock shaped vaguely like a seat, traditionally sat upon by women who wish to conceive a child. One of the most impressive parts of the cathedral, the first-floor **bishop's chapel**, at the west end of the nave, is only accessible by guided tour (daily: April–Sept 11.20am, 2.20pm & 3.50pm; Oct–March 10.30am & 2pm; €3.60). It's famous for its frescoes, painted in 1230 and restored in 1263 after a fire, depicting Old Testament scenes in vibrant turquoises, greens and ruddy browns. There are also daily tours (10.30am, 1.30pm & 3pm; €7.20) that take in the entire cathedral – tickets for all tours are available at the office next to the cathedral.

Friesach

Back on the main northbound road and rail route, 10km north of Pöckstein, the walled town of **FRIESACH** hoves into view like something out of a fanciful medieval manuscript, its spindly towers and spires poking up from the various small hillocks on which the town is built. Like most places in this part of Austria, it was settled by Slavs in the sixth century, before their gradual displacement by Bavarians and Franks. Ninth-century Holy Roman Emperor Louis (Ludwig) the German gave the town to the archbishops of Salzburg, who established a thriving market here, and by the thirteenth century it was the most important urban centre in Carinthia. Richard the Lionheart passed through town on his way to the Crusades in 1192, although Friesach's main claim to fame in this period was the famous **Tourney** in 1224, when Duke Leopold VI of Austria invited the flower of central European chivalry to a gathering later immortalized in the poems of knight and minstrel Ulrich von Liechtenstein (lord of nearby Murau in Styria; see p.301). The event is nowadays remembered in the **Spectaculum** on the last Saturday in July, when the locals dress up in medieval costumes and the streets fill with stalls selling food and drink.

The Town

Friesach's sleepy **Hauptplatz** is arranged around the **Stadtbrunnen**, an incongruously Italianate sixteenth-century fountain whose basin bears reliefs of Perseus and several other beast-slaying heroes. Over to the north, the Gothic bulk of the largely nineteenth-century **Stadtpfarrkirche** is probably worth missing in favour of the **Dominikanerkirche** further northeast, which looks equally plain on first inspection, but is much more rewarding inside. There's a harrowing fourteenth-century *Crucifixion* on the north side of the nave and, behind it, a seventeenth-century *Pietà*, the whole scene surrounded by brightly coloured, fruit-laden foliage. To the right of the altar stands another fine piece of medieval wood sculpture, the delicate *Friesacher Madonna* of 1320, while on the north side of the choir the Johannes altar of 1500 bears a central relief featuring Christ flanked by SS George and Florian, and wings showing scenes

from the life of St John – including his exile on the island of Patmos and an attempt by Roman soldiers to boil him in oil.

West of the Hauptplatz, pathways lead up towards part-ruined stretches of the town's medieval fortifications. One of the better-kept bits, to the northwest, is the **Petersberg**, where the surviving keep of a thirteenth-century fortress now holds the **Stadtmuseum** (July–Aug daily 10am–5pm; May–June & Sept daily 1–5pm; €3), with archeological, art and craft exhibits on five floors. Most interesting are the Gothic altarpieces on the second floor – one of which was produced by the local workshop of Konrad von Friesach in 1435 – and the fifth-floor display of medieval copperware, featuring a fifteenth-century doctor's blood-letting beaker, decorated with an Adam-and-Eve motif. From the Petersberg's viewing terrace you can gaze out towards the Virgilienberg on the south side of town, where portions of a ruined thirteenth-century church stand silhouetted against the sky.

Back down in the town centre, a road from the eastern side of the Hauptplatz leads along to the Fürstenhof, a former abbey that's now home to one of the more imaginative museums in the area, **Die Spur des Einhorns** ("On the trail of the unicorn"; May to mid-Oct daily 10am–4pm; €5.50, tickets from the tourist office). The exhibition, created by artist Hans Hoffer, is a multimedia installation exploring medieval themes by bringing tales such as King Arthur and the Crusades to life with sound and light, whilst exploring themes of honour and leadership mixed in with contemporary CNN footage. It's all in German, but an English language leaflet explaining each room is available on request.

Practicalities

From the **train station** on the eastern fringes of town, it's a straightforward five-minute walk to the **tourist office** in the Fürstenhof (May–Oct daily 10am–4pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 8am–noon; ⓣ04268/4300, ⓦwww.friesach.at). To get there, walk down Bahnhofstrasse and turn right just before the Hauptplatz. They can point you in the direction of the very few **private rooms** (2) available. Alternatively, of the town's main **hotels**, grouped around the Hauptplatz, *Zum Goldenen Anker*, Bahnhofstr 3 (ⓣ04268/2313, ⓦwww.goldeneranker.at.tf; 3), is the most basic, a traditional downtown *Gasthof* offering rooms with shower and TV, and a friendly restaurant downstairs, while the *Friesacherhof*, Hauptplatz 4 (ⓣ04268/2123, ⓦwww.friesacherhof.at; 3), offers rooms with en-suite facilities together with satellite TV and phone. Best of the bunch is the 4-star *Metnitztalerhof*, Hauptplatz 11 (ⓣ04268/2510-0, ⓦwww.metnitztalerhof.at; 6), which offers slightly more in terms of room size and plushness.

An atmospheric place to **eat** is *Speckladle Höferer*, a few steps north of the Hauptplatz on Wienerstr 12, offering everything from cheap Wurst and Nudel dishes to Wiener Schnitzels and wild boar. Both the *Friesacherhof* and *Metnitztalerhof* hotels have restaurants offering Carinthian specialities alongside some more expensive game, fish and locally raised lamb dishes, and both have plenty of outdoor seating in summer. The *Craigher* on the corner of Hauptplatz and Herrengasse is a comfortable coffee-and-cakes venue that makes its own chocolates. For late-night **drinking**, there are a couple of bars just off the Hauptplatz, notably the cosy *Platzl*, Theaterplatz 2; and the marginally more raucous *Burg*, Fleischbankgasse 6.

Hüttenberg

On arrival in **HÜTTENBERG**, a historic iron-ore-mining village in the hills 15km east of Friesach, it's difficult at first to believe you're still in Austria.

A massive picture of the Buddha hangs from a cliff at the southern entrance to town, marking the starting point of the Tibetan-inspired **Lingkor**, a high-tech, cliffside-hugging stairway that is intended to aid meditation and prayer. That such Eastern esoterica should exist here at all is largely down to the local-born mountaineer and explorer **Heinrich Harrer** (see box opposite), whose exploits – including the epic walk to Tibet from northern India that made him famous – are remembered in Hüttenberg's Heinrich-Harrer-**Museum**. Hüttenberg's mining past also plays a role in the place's appeal, although it's difficult to imagine that this tranquil, rural environment of forest-fringed valleys was once a thriving centre of industry. A century ago, more than seven hundred people worked in the mines of **Knappenberg** – now the site of a **show-mine** – in the hills above Hüttenberg; and a further 800 worked in the blast furnaces of **Heft**, 2km up the valley to the east. By 1978 the whole mining and smelting operation had been wound down, the locally produced metal priced out of the market by cheap foreign imports. Mining traditions are celebrated, however, in the **Reiftanz**, which takes place on the first Sunday after Whitsun every three years (the last one was in spring 2007). In addition to a lot of processing around in traditional miners' uniforms and a good deal of alcohol-fuelled merrymaking,the *Reiftanz* centres on an age-old ceremony in which the social hierarchy is symbolically reversed – and local dignitaries have the honour of being lightly whipped on the backside by mining representatives.

Hüttenberg isn't accessible by train, but there are frequent **buses** from both Klagenfurt and St Veit.

The Town

Housed in a modern pavilion at the southern end of town, below the Lingkor, the **Heinrich-Harrer-Museum** (daily: April–June & Sept–Oct 10am–5pm; July & Aug 10am–6pm; €8, combined ticket with Knappenberg mine and Puppenmuseum €12; Ⓦwww.harrermuseum.at) was blessed by the Dalai Lama himself when it first opened in 1992. The special throne that was built for the Dalai Lama, together with Tibetan costumes, prayer wheels and trumpets made from human bones (those made from the bones of young girls, holy men or murder victims are considered especially lucky), are displayed on the upper floor of the building. Also of interest are the various totems associated with the Harrer cult, among them his mountaineering boots, golf clubs and an old tennis racket – Harrer introduced tennis to Tibet, making a clay court out of dried yak droppings. A well-organized ethnographic collection follows, largely made up of the items collected by Harrer on his travels through South America, Borneo and Africa – odd, though eminently practical, are the wooden head supports used by the Turkana tribesmen of Kenya to prevent their extravagant hairstyles from becoming tousled during sleep.

Knappenberg and Heft

Ranged across the hillside 4km east of Hüttenberg, and served by local bus, or reached by a 45-minute uphill walk through the woods from behind the Heinrich Harrer museum, **KNAPPENBERG** (the name means "miners' hill") flourished as a centre of iron-ore mining from the days of the Celts until 1978. Some of the underground galleries have now been converted into a **Schaubergwerk** (daily: April–June & Sept–Oct 10am–5pm; July & Aug 10am–6pm; tours depart hourly; €8, combined ticket with Harrer Museum and Puppenmuseum €12), in which visitors are taken on a short walking tour and given several ear-splitting demonstrations of how different drilling tools worked. The ticket includes entry to the **museum** next door, a modest display that features miners' ceremonial uniforms,

Heinrich Harrer

Explorer, all-round sportsman, mountaineer and one of the great popularizers of Tibetan culture in the West, **Heinrich Harrer** (1912–2006) is one of contemporary Austria's most compelling figures. He's best known for his book Seven Years in Tibet, a stirring account of his adventures in the 1940s that was filmed for Hollywood in 1997 with Brad Pitt taking the lead role.

Born in Obergossen near Knappenberg, Harrer developed a passion for mountaineering and skiing as a child, and represented Austria in both the downhill and slalom in the **Winter Olympics** of 1936. The young Harrer returned without any medals, but was crowned World Student Downhill champion the following year. Together with three colleagues, Harrer made the first successful assault on the north wall of the Eiger in 1938 (subsequently immortalized in his book, The White Spider), an exploit which made him internationally famous and secured his place on an **Austro-German Himalayan expedition** the following year. Harrer's exploits came to the attention of the Nazis, who eagerly recruited him into the Party. Harrer became skiing instructor to **the SS**, and even got married (to Lotte Wenger, daughter of Greenland explorer Alfred Wenger) in an SS uniform. What's unclear is whether he was a committed believer, an ambitious careerist or merely the passive recipient of a status bestowed on him by a regime keen to associate itself with sporting heroes.

Fortuitously, Harrer was on the other side of the world scrambling around Himalayan foothills when World War II broke out. As a citizen of the German Reich, however, he was interned by the British at Dehra Dun in northwestern India, where he killed time learning Tibetan and Japanese. In April 1944 he escaped, intending to cross the Himalayas in search of Tibet, a country which had long exerted a fascination over right-wing German thinkers, who believed it to be the original home of the Aryan race. Together with colleague Peter Aufschneiter, Harrer finally reached the Tibetan capital Lhasa two years later, and immediately found a role for himself in this strange environment, becoming the Mr Fix-It that locals called for whenever some aspect of Western technology or culture needed explaining. He was in the process of teaching Buddhist monks how to skate when he was summoned by an intrigued Dalai Lama (then a child) – they remained friends. Once back in Europe, the success of the book **Seven Years in Tibet** and the documentary film of the same name enabled Harrer to finance further expeditions, starting with a trip to the Amazon in 1953. For the next three decades, he was constantly on the road, visiting Africa, South America and the Far East, pausing only briefly in 1958 to become the Austrian golf champion. He retired to live in Liechtenstein, returning frequently to Hüttenberg to visit the museum erected in his honour.

a model of the charcoal-fired smelting kilns once used by the Celts, and several cabinets full of crystals and minerals.

Two kilometres east of Hüttenberg, the hamlet of **HEFT** is dominated by a semi-ruined nineteenth-century **blasting furnace**, an impressive piece of industrial heritage whose smelting towers bring to mind the fortifications of a medieval castle. Parts of the complex have been restored and modernized to house artists' studios, and high-profile **exhibitions** are held there over the summer (May–Oct Mon–Fri 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm). Hüttenberg's tourist office will provide details of what's on.

Practicalities

Most people visit Hüttenberg on a day-trip from elsewhere, though the town's **tourist office** (daily: April–June & Sept–Oct 10am–5pm; July & Aug 10am–6pm; ⓣ04263/8108, ⓦwww.huettenberg.at), in the Heinrich-Harrer-Museum, can offer **private rooms** (❷) in either Hüttenberg or Knappenberg

if you choose to stay overnight. *Zur Post*, Reiftanzplatz 14 (☎04263/212; ❸), is the sole source of **hotel** accommodation in Hüttenberg itself, but only has four rooms, two of which have en-suite shower and WC. Up in Knappenberg, *Geo Centrum* (☎04263/720, ⓦwww.geozentrum.at; ❷) is a large modern place with simple en-suite doubles, although it's popular with school groups and is often fully booked. Six kilometres south of Hüttenberg, a minor road heads east up into the hills to **LÖLLING-GRABEN**, another 6km distant, site of the best **hotel** in the area, *Landgasthof Neugebauer* (☎04263/407, ⓦwww.landgasthof-neugebauer.at; ❹), which has snazzy rooms, complete with TV and phone, as well as a highly regarded **restaurant** offering a mixture of Austrian standards and Carinthian specialities.

Best places to **eat** in Hüttenberg are the *Gasthaus Zois*, Münichsdorferplatz 9, serving all the usual schnitzels and, at lunchtime, an excellent *Bauernschmaus*, or cold meat platter, or the restaurant of *Zur Post*, which offers similarly hearty Austrian fare, and often has Tibetan dishes such as *momos* (dumplings) thrown in for good measure.

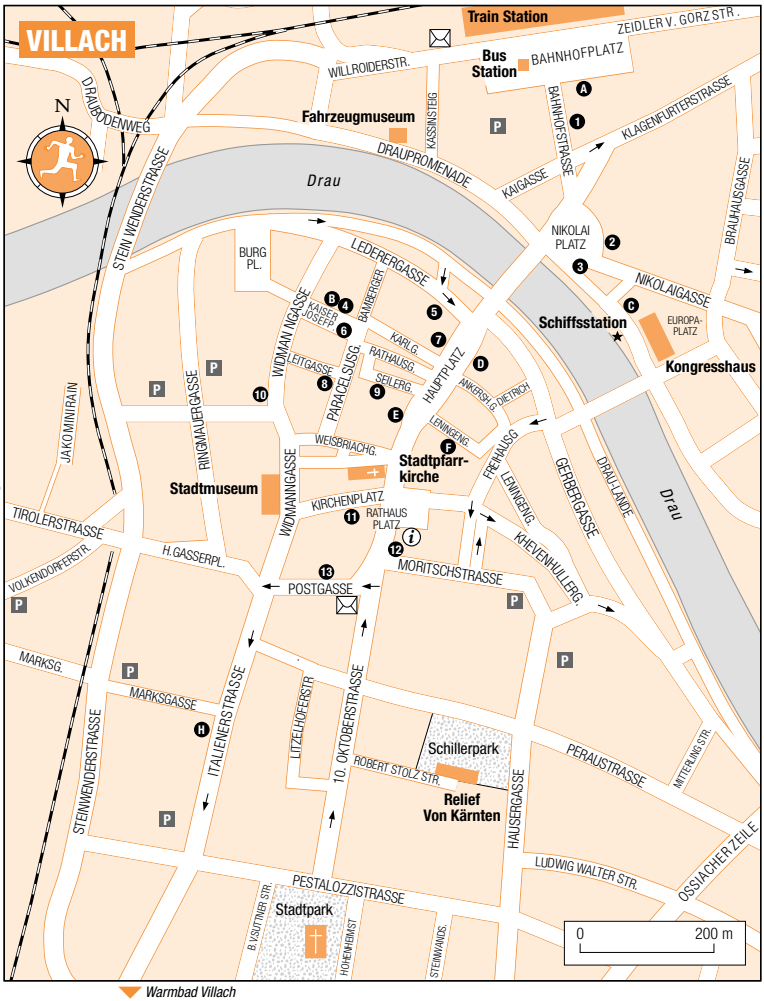
Villach and around

Sprawling across a lush plain near the confluence of the Drau and Gail, with the Karawanken Alps to the south, **VILLACH** ranks as Carinthia's most attractive provincial town. Local place names – like Villach itself, and suburbs of Vassach, Fellach and Pogöriach – are evidence of the area's Slavic origins, which gave way to German influences in the late Middle Ages, when courtly families like the Diedrichsteins and the Khevenhüllers built town houses here to take advantage of its growing importance as a trade centre. While Villach's standing has since rested more on its role as a major rail and motorway junction, its core of medieval and Renaissance buildings presents a convincing argument for a stay of a day or two. Nightlife in Villach is also generally better than that in its larger local rival Klagenfurt, and it's a good urban base from which to explore nearby mountains and lakes. **Schloss Landskron**, on the northern fringes of town, presents one obvious excursion, as do **Mount Dobratsch** and the Terra Mystica show-mine at **Bad Bleiberg**, both to the west. An important resort area in its own right, **Ossiachersee** (see p.348) is so close to Villach (and easily accessible by bus) that it's possible to stay in town and head out to a lakeside beach during the daytime.

Most important date in the folklore calendar is the **Villacher Kirchtag**, which falls on the first weekend in August, when people from all over Carinthia, Slovenia and northern Italy descend on the town to indulge in a weekend of folk music and outdoor drinking, culminating in a Saturday-night parade through town in traditional dress. The main event of the winter is the **Villacher Fasching** (Villach Carnival), when Austria's biggest carnival parade takes over the city streets on the nearest Saturday to Shrove Tuesday. Accommodation should be reserved well in advance on both occasions.

Arrival, information and accommodation

The **bus** and **train stations** are on Bahnhofplatz, just north of the centre. Walk south along Bahnhofstrasse, cross the river and proceed up the Hauptplatz to reach the **tourist office** on Rathausplatz (May, June, Sept & Oct Mon–Fri 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–12.30pm &



ACCOMMODATION				RESTAURANTS, BARS & CAFÉS					
Goldenes Lamm	D	Romantik Hotel Post	E	Café-Konditorei Rainer	11	Konditorei Bernold	3	Spritz Time	2
Holiday Inn	C	Youth hostel	G	Café-Vinothek Spinne	13	Kookies Bar	8	Stern	4
Hotel City	A	Zum Goldenen Löwen	F	Delphi	5	Park Café	12	Trastevere	10
Kasino	B			Hofwirt	7	Salud	9	Villacher Brauhof	1
Kramer	H					Soho	6		

1.30–5pm; ⓣ04242/205-2900, ⓦwww.villach.at). They can book you into one of the few **private rooms** (②), though none is particularly convenient for the centre.

There's a **youth hostel**, a lemon-coloured building some 1000m west of the centre at Dinzlweg 34 (ⓣ04242/56368, ⓔjgh.villach@oejhv.or.at) with 4- and 5-person dorms and the possiblilty for double-dorm occupancy (②). Reception is open 7–10am and 5–10pm.

Hotels

Goldenes Lamm Hauptplatz 1 ⓣ04242/24105, ⓦwww.goldeneslamm.at. Ideally located main-square hotel offering comfortable, modern rooms with en-suite shower and WC. 6

Holiday Inn Europaplatz 2 ⓣ04242/22522, ⓦwww.hi-villach.at. Unusually for a major-chain hotel, this is coolness incarnate, with matt surfaces, flat-screen TVs and ultra-modern bathrooms in the rooms, and a great restaurant-bar area facing the river. 7

Hotel City Bahnhofplatz 3 ⓣ04242/27896, ⓦwww.hotelcity.at. Modern business-oriented place directly opposite the train station. Although it lacks any real atmosphere, its en-suite rooms come with TV, minibar and all mod-cons. 6

Kasino Kaiser-Josef-Platz 4 ⓣ04242/24449, ⓦwww.hotel-kasino.at. Comfortable city-centre choice, just west of the Hauptplatz on a quiet square. Somewhat bland en-suite rooms, made up for by the central location. 5

Kramer Italienerstr 14 ⓣ04242/24953, ⓦwww.hotelgasthofkramer.at. Unpretentious, friendly medium-sized downtown hotel, just south of the centre, offering standard en suites with TV. 5

Romantik Hotel Post Hauptplatz 26 ⓣ04242/26101, ⓦwww.romantik-hotel.com. Classic central Gasthof occupying the sixteenth-century town house of the counts of Khevenhüller, which once hosted the likes of Emperor Karl V and Maria Theresia. Swish, modern and comfortable rooms. Wi-Fi throughout. 6

Zum Goldenen Löwen Leinigengasse 4 ⓣ04242/24582, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/zum-goldenen-loewen. Simple en-suite rooms with TV, above a Gasthof-restaurant in an alley just off the Hauptplatz. 4

The Town

Although lacking any individual star buildings, Villach's **Hauptplatz** is an extremely attractive affair, its lines of pastel-coloured town houses sloping gently upwards from the south bank of the Drau River. The largely pedestrianized warren of arcades and alleyways on either side of the square still holds an evocative, late-medieval atmosphere, making it an enticing area in which to wander. Raised on a terrace at the southern end of the Hauptplatz, the fourteenth-century **Stadtpfarrkirche Hl. Jakob** is home to a fine collection of sixteenth-century tombs. To the right of the high altar in the Diedrichstein chapel, Sigismund von Diedrichstein (lord of Finkenstein Castle, south of Villach) is shown in full armour with his symbol, a snake, positioned above his head. To the left, the chapel and tomb of Christoph von Khevenhüller, master of Landskron Castle, features a relief of the deceased together with wives Elizabeth and Anna-Maria. From the same era is the stone pulpit from 1555 carved in the form of the tree of Jesse, with the venerable Israelite himself shown lying at the base. Just outside the church, the **Stadtpfarrturm**, or bell tower, is worth scaling for an excellent panorama of the surrounding mountains (Mon–Sat: May, June, Sept & Oct 10am–4pm; July & Aug 10am–6pm; €2). A short distance to the west on Widmanngasse, the **Stadtmuseum** (May–Oct Mon–Sat 10am–4.30pm; €2.50) regales visitors with a well presented if modest collection of local Bronze and Iron Age finds, together with some Gothic altar panels.

Tucked away in an area of attractive nineteenth-century villas southeast of the centre, the **Schillerpark**, on Peraustrasse, harbours a purpose-built pavilion containing the **Relief von Kärnten** (May–Oct Mon–Sat 10am–4.30pm; €2.50), a vast 1:10,000-scale relief map of Carinthia that functions as a fantastic visual aid to your travels round the province. Hailed as one of the wonders of Austrian tourism when unveiled in 1912, the relief is viewed from a balustraded gallery where wall-mounted prints and old photographs provide added visual context.

The motor museum at Zauchen

Six kilometres east of Villach – take the Klagenfurt road and turn right into the village of **ZAUCHEN** – is the privately owned **Fahrzeugmuseum**, or motor museum (mid-June to mid-Sept daily 9am–5pm; mid-Sept to mid-June Mon–Sat

10am–noon & 2–4pm; €6.90), an engaging jumble which includes antique radios, early computers and old cameras as well as modes of transport. Early Vespas and Lambrettas rub shoulders with more eccentric machines like the Messerschmitt KR175, a half-bike/half-bubble car that somehow never made it as an icon of consumerism, while a couple of classic Porsches will satisfy the sports-car fetishists. But it's the less glamorous motors that are more compelling, such as the 1936 Fiat Topolino, which along with the German Volkswagen was an important step in bringing motoring to the masses. Labelling throughout the display is patchy – a cheeky tactic designed to make you buy the catalogue (€2.90).

Eating, drinking and entertainment

Most of the central *Gasthöfe* offer reasonably good-value Austrian and Carinthian **food**, and it's well worth looking out for boards advertising set menus, especially at lunchtime. Fairly central **snacking** options include traditional Austrian sausage fare from the Würstelstand just north of the Hauptplatz by the bridge, or pizza slices, open sandwiches and filled rolls from *Panino* at the northern end of the Hauptplatz.

The main **drinking** area, which remains animated well into the early hours at weekends, is the pedestrian zone, stretching westwards from the Hauptplatz, where a variety of bars lurk in the alleyways around Lederergasse and Paracelsusgasse.

Restaurants

Delphi Lederergasse 5. Flashy Greek restaurant offering an appetizing and dependable mid-price range of souvlakia, *stifado* and moussaka.

Hofwirt Hauptplatz 10. Traditional, homely Gasthof in an alleyway just off the main square. A good place to try Carinthian *Käsenudl*, although all the usual Austrian veal and pork dishes are also available. Not too expensive, and even cheaper daily specials are chalked up outside.

Romantik Hotel Post Hauptplatz 26. Top-notch Austrian and modern European cuisine in the city centre's most evocative Gasthof. Expect to pay €30 per head for a meal with drinks.

Salud Seilergasse 1. Mexican bar-restaurant in an alleyway just off the Hauptplatz, serving up a range of central American food. Bubbling atmosphere to a soundtrack of cool latino-jazz sounds, along with a decent cocktail menu.

Stern Kaiser-Josef-Platz 5. Laid-back restaurant on a quiet square and offering a vaguely eastern theme. Good choice of salads and meat dishes, as well as a tempting breakfast menu, and the occasional sushi night. Also a chilled drinking option in the evenings.

Trastevere Widmanngasse 30. Roomy and popular Italian eatery with outdoor seating in an arcaded courtyard, and a wooden-table interior. Risottos, pastas and pizzas for €8–9, more substantial main courses like *saltimbocca*-style cuts of veal or grilled fish for €15.

Villacher Brauhof Bahnhofstr 8. Large restaurant and beer hall run by the local brewery, offering good-value Austrian food and a few Carinthian specialities.

Cafés and bars

Café-Konditorei Rainer Oberer Kirchplatz. This café opposite the parish church serves the best cakes and strudels in town and also makes its own gingerbread and chocolates – a great place to stock up on souvenirs for the sweet-toothed. Till 7pm.

Café-Vinothek Spinne Postgasse 3. Snug wine bar serving Austrian and Italian tipple, as well as light meals. Closed Sat & Sun.

Kookies Bar Leitegasse 1. Small and friendly place in the middle of Villach's main bar-crawling area, attracting a raucous hedonistic crowd at weekends but preserving the ambience of a neighbourhood bar at other times.

Konditorei Bernold corner of Nikolaigasse and Bahnhofstr. Prime coffee-slurping and cake-nibbling venue on the first floor of a riverside building, with a terrace overlooking the Drau. Till 7pm.

Park Café Moritschstr 2. This roomy high-ceilinged coffeehouse on the ground floor of the erstwhile Park Hotel is a great place for both daytime coffee-and-pastry sessions and nocturnal cocktail-aided conversation. Occasional jazz concerts and literary readings.

Soho Freihausgasse 13. One of the more hip drinking spots in town, with a range of cocktails and trendy, retro feel, plus weekend club nights. Open daily from 8pm.

Spritz Time Nikolaiplatz. Italian-owned café-bar serving up Austrian beers, Friulian wines and international cocktails to a classy and youthful crowd indulging in shouty conversations over loud background music. Heaving with Villach's beautiful people on Fri nights.

Entertainment

The modern Kongresshaus on Europaplatz (☎04242/23561), just behind the tourist office, is the main venue for **classical** concerts, big **theatrical productions** and **musicals**. Smaller-scale drama takes place in the Neue Bühne, Rathausplatz (☎04242/287164-0, ⓦwww.neuebuehnevillach.at). Advance bookings for both of the above – as well as for other major cultural events in the region – can be made through Villacher Kartenbüro, Freihausgasse 3 (☎04242/27341). The Evangelical church in the Stadtpark sometimes holds concerts of religious music.

Venues for **pop-rock** concerts and rave-style happenings tend to change, although posters and flyers in the Kartenbüro will have details of anything going on during your stay.

Listings

Bike rental Das Radl, Italienstr 22b ☎04242/26954.
Car rental Budget, Ossiacher Zeile 72 ☎0676/0159186.
Cinema Stadtkinocenter, Rathausplatz (☎04242/27000), and Cineplexx, Maria-Gailer-Str (☎04242/31330). Both big multi-screen showing top international (dubbed) movies.
Hospital Landeskrankenhaus Villach, Nikolaigasse 43 ☎04242/208-0.
Internet café Cafeteria Nikolai, Nikolaigasse 16 (Mon–Fri 7am–9pm, Sat 7am–2pm; ☎04242/22511).
Motoring organization ÖAMTC, Kärntnerstr 25 (☎04242/34200, emergency breakdown service ☎120).
Pharmacy Kreis-Apotheke, Hauptplatz 9.
Police Bundespolizeidirektion Villach, Trattengasse 34 ☎04242/2033.
Post office Hauptpostamt, Willroiderstr, next to the train station (daily 7am–10pm).
Swimming Erlebnistherme, Kadischenallee 25–27, Warmbad Villach, is an indooor pool with water slides, whirlpools and other fun features (€10.50; bus #1 from Bahnhofplatz). For outdoor bathing, there are four small lakes strung out in the northern suburbs of Villach – St Leonhardersee, Vassachersee, Magdalensee and Silbersee (all accessible by city buses from the Bahnhofplatz) – each of which has a small Strandbad. Otherwise, head for nearby Faakersee or Ossiachersee.
Tennis Tenniscamp Warmbad Villach, Warmbachweg 16 ☎04242/32564; outdoor and indoor courts from €8 per hour.
Train information ☎05/1717.
Travel agents Kärntner Reisebüro, Gerbergasse 12 ☎04242/29888; Springer, Hans-Gasser-Platz 1 ☎04242/22100-0.

West of Villach: Dobratsch and Bad Bleiberg

A long, high ridge rising to the west of town, the 2166-metre **Dobratsch** is an easily identifiable landmark from whichever direction you approach Villach. Its upper reaches are accessible via a toll road, the **Villacher Alpenstrasse** (ⓦwww.villacher-alpenstrasse.at; cars €13, motorbikes €7, bicycles free), which commences just southwest of town in the suburb of Möltschach and climbs steeply out of the valley before proceeding westwards along the ridge. About 8km out of Villach, the road passes the **Alpengarten** (June–Aug daily 9am–6pm; €2.50), a large collection of alpine flowers and plants native to the region. Eight kilometres further on, the road terminates at **Rosstratte**, the site of the Dobratsch natural park (ⓦwww.naturpark dobratsch.info) where a popular hour-long walk leads to the 1957-metre **Höhenrain**. Here, you can savour impressive views in all directions, or

follow marked paths to the **Ludwig-Walter-Haus** (90min distant) just below the summit of Dobratsch itself.

Nestling below Dobratsch to the north, the erstwhile lead-mining settlement of **BAD BLEIBERG**, about 15km west of Villach, is reached by a minor road that leaves town from the suburb of Fellach. Mining stopped here in 1993, due to exhaustion of the ore deposits, and the galleries have now been transformed into one of Austria's most imaginative show-mines, **Terra Mystica** (daily: July & Aug 9.30am–3pm; May–June & Sept–Oct 10.30am–3pm; Nov–April one tour every Sat at 3pm; €16; ⓦwww.terra-mystica.at). A ninety-minute guided tour begins with a short video, in German, about the history of the mine, followed by a descent into the mine workings by wooden slide. Here, images are projected onto the cavern walls to create a highly effective underground son et lumière, with a German commentary (call a day in advance to request a tour in English) on the creation of the earth and humans' relationship with the environment, plus an account of the cult of St Barbara, patron saint of miners, and jokey treatment of subterranean creatures like dwarfs and goblins.

There's a small museum in the show-mine's reception area displaying ceremonial mining uniforms and diagrams of the mine workings. Probably the most valuable item here is the banner presented to the Bleiberg miners by Prince Eugène of Savoy in 1717, after several of their number had served as sappers in the Habsburg armies – most memorably helping to blow up Turkish positions during the siege of Belgrade. Terra Mystica lies 2km from Bad Bleiberg's town centre. Buses from Villach drop nearby, from where it's a ten-minute walk.

There's a café at Terra Mystica itself and a much finer **restaurant** 2km away at the *Bleibergerhof* **hotel**, Drei Lärchen 150 (ⓣ04244/2205, ⓦwww.bleibergerhof.at; €100 dbl), which serves exemplary *Käsnudeln* alongside more substantial beef, duck and fish dishes in sleek modern surroundings. It's also a swanky place **to stay**, with designer furnishings in the rooms, Wi-Fi coverage throughout, and both indoor and outdoor pools fed by the local mineral springs.

Schloss Landskron

Six kilometres northeast of Villach, just off the road to Ossiachersee, **Schloss Landskron** dominates the northern side of the Drautal from its hilltop perch. The castle was a stronghold of Christoph von Khevenhüller in the sixteenth century. As a staunch Protestant, Christoph was to endure the confiscation of all his lands, however, and Landskron was handed over to the solidly Catholic Diedrichsteins. Though imposing from a distance, the castle is now largely ruined, the only habitable section housing a café and (fairly expensive) restaurant. Most people come here to sip coffee and admire the view towards the Karawanken mountains to the south, but there's also an **Adlerschau**, or eagle show (daily: May, June, Sept & Oct 11am & 2.30pm; July–Aug 11am, 2.30pm & 5.30pm; €8; ⓦwww.adlerflugschau.com), which involves a falconer sending a domesticated hunting bird on several swooping errands down into the valley. Just below the castle gates, **Affenberg**, or Ape Mountain (April–Oct daily 9.30am–5.30pm; 50min tours depart at 30min intervals; €8; ⓦwww.affenberg.com), is a small reserve containing a community of over 100 Japanese macaques. **Buses** on the Villach–Ossiach route pass by the access road to the castle, and boats on Ossaichersee stop at nearby St Andrä, from where it's a twenty-minute walk uphill. Private cars can be driven right up to the castle gates, although a **toll** (€2 per vehicle) is charged on the access road.

Ossiachersee

Just beyond Landskron and only 8km from central Villach, **Ossiachersee** has a completely different atmosphere from its near-neighbour Wörthersee (see p.327). Squeezed between wooded hills, the settlements along the lake lack the bustle of places like nearby Pörtschach and Velden, and generally cater for a quieter bunch of tourists looking for family-oriented holidays. There's a wealth of campsites, small pensions and outdoor activities but nightlife is fairly low-key, revolving around a few cosy restaurants and rustic bars.

The northern shore, served by Bundesstr 94 and the Villach–Feldkirchen–St Veit rail route, can get traffic-clogged in summer, and resort towns like **Annenheim**, **Bodensdorf** and **Sattendorf** lack any real character. However, the presence of the **Gerlitzen** mountain immediately to the north – served by the Kanzelbahn gondola from Annenheim – makes this a good spot for walking. The southern shore of the lake, reached from Villach by bus, is an endless procession of lake-clinging campsites, punctuated by the villages of **St Andrä**, **Ostriach** and **Ossiach**. The last, site of a historic abbey and a summer music festival, is probably the main destination in these parts for visitors.

Boat transport links the main settlements on both shores from mid-May to early October, with eight daily sailings in July and August – the high season – and three to four daily at other times. Single tickets cost from €2.50–7.50 depending on how far you travel, but a better option is the **Grosse Seerundfahrt ticket** at €11.50, which is valid for two and a half hours – enough time to sail all the way around the lake and back – during which time you can hop off and on as many times as you wish.

The southern shore

In general, the southern shore is quieter and more characterful than the north. Heading east from Villach, the lakeside road passes through the hamlet of **HEILIGENGESTADE**, site of *Camping Berghof* (Ⓣ04242/41133, Ⓦwww.seecamping-berghof.at), the lake's most highly rated site and home to a tennis school and a large water activities centre. The next village along, **OSTRIACH**, is home to a string of enormous **campsites**, all visible from the main road and all enjoying a stretch of the lakeshore: *Camping Kölbl* (Ⓣ04243/8223, Ⓦwww.camping-koelbl.at), and *Camping Parth* (Ⓣ04243/2744-0, Ⓦwww.parth.at) are two of the best equipped. There are a couple of other nice places to stay in the vicinity: *Frühstückspension Rosenheim*, Ostriach 73 (Ⓣ04243/438, Ⓦwww.landhaus-rosenheim.at; ❷), a part-wooden, balconied house with a small outdoor pool, about five minutes' walk from the lake, and *Strandhotel Fünfhaus*, Ostriach 85 (Ⓣ04243/432, Ⓦwww.fuenfhaus.co.at; ❺), a large lakeside hotel with its own waterside stretch of lawn and a waterskiing school.

Ostriach fades into **OSSIACH**, the lake's most popular settlement largely because the former Benedictine abbey adds distinction to its pretty, lakeside setting. The abbey **church** (daily 9am–6pm; free) is renowned for the cake-icing stucco-work of its interior, and serves as a concert venue during the Carinthian Summer Festival of chamber music, which runs from June to August – information and tickets are available from **Carinthischer Sommer**, A-9570 Ossiach, Stift (Ⓣ04243/2510, Ⓦwww.carinthischersommer.at). Not far from the church lies a large grassy Strandbad (€3.50) with plastic flumes and boat hire. Ossiach's **tourist office**, in the Gemeindeamt on the main road in the village centre (June & Sept daily 9am–6pm; July & Aug daily 9am–8pm; Oct–May Mon, Wed & Thurs 7am–noon & 1–3pm, Tues 7am–noon & 1–5.30pm, Fri 7am–noon; Ⓣ04243/497, Ⓦwww.ossiach.at), will fix you up with a **private room** (❷) in either Ossiach or Ostriach, and can also give

advice on the numerous pensions (2). The most evocative place to stay in Ossiach is the *Gasthof Seewirt* (T04243/2268, Wwww.seewirt-ossiach.at; 5), a sixteenth-century house down on the lakefront near the abbey. The **restaurant** of the *Gasthof zur Post*, on the main road, has a good selection of Austrian dishes, while *Pizzeria Mamma Mia*, on the lane from the main road towards the abbey and lakefront, offers good-value pizzas and pastas, in addition to a couple of fish dishes. Lower down the lane, *NaturGasthof Schlosswirt* offers organically reared meats as well as the best range of **vegetarian** food on the lake, with dishes like rice with spinach and tofu weighing in at around €9.

The northern shore and the Gerlitzen

Travelling westwards along the northern shore from the west, the first settlement of any note is **ANNENHEIM**, a small village whose houses creep up the sides of the **Kanzelhöhe**, the wooded ridge to the north. The **Kanzelbahn** gondola (mid-June to Sept & Dec to mid-April daily 9am–5pm; May to mid-June Sat & Sun 9am–5pm; €16.50 return) ascends the ridge, connecting with the **Gipfelbahn** chairlift, which continues to the 1909-metre **Gerlitzen** – also accessible by a toll road from Bodensdorf 5km east of Annenheim (cars €8, motorbikes €3.50). An attractive area of alpine meadow and the starting point for a number of scenic walks, the Gerlitzen also commands one of the best views in Carinthia, with Villach and Faakersee laid out to the southwest, Wörthersee to the southeast, and the Karawanken Alps to the south.

A **campsite**, the *Campingbad Ossiachersee* (T04248/2757, Wwww.camping-ossiachersee.at), edges the lake at the western end of the village, though the site is largely unshaded. The *Aichelberghof* **restaurant**, on the lakefront by the ship station, is a good place to dine on fresh trout or simply to hang out and drink.

Spittal an der Drau and Millstättersee

About 40km northwest of Villach, lying just off the main road and rail route to Salzburg, **Millstättersee** lacks the nightlife, high-society reputation and high prices of Wörthersee, but it holds the usual mixture of bathing, windsurfing, boating and other activities. The biggest of the three main settlements along the shore is **Seeboden**, at the western end of the lake, but by far the nicest is **Millstatt**, on the northern side, which boasts a historic abbey and a wealth of charming nineteenth-century villas, many now converted into hotels.

Four kilometres west of the lake, commanding the approaches to it, the historic town of **Spittal an der Drau** is an important provincial centre straddling the main Villach–Salzburg road and rail routes. The tourist office in Spittal can book **rooms** throughout the Spittal and Millstättersee area, making it a useful tourist gateway to the region; likewise, tourist offices on the lake can book rooms in Spittal.

Spittal an der Drau

SPITTAL AN DER DRAU owes its existence to the paternalism of twelfth-century aristocrats, the Ortenburgs, who established a *Spittal*, or hospice, here to care for the local poor and provide a rest stop for travellers on their way across the mountain passes to the north. The hospice that gave the town its name no longer exists, and nowadays Spittal is instead largely visited for **Schloss Porcia**, a fine Renaissance chateau built by Gabriel von Salamanca, a Spanish nobleman who served as imperial treasurer in the sixteenth century. The Schloss was sold

to the Austro-Italian Porcia family in 1662, although the Salamancas are still remembered by the annual **Salamancafest** in late June, when the townsfolk don sixteenth-century garb and street stalls dole out food and drink.

Spittal is the starting point of a cable car to the nearby **Goldeck** peak, and a good base from which to visit Millstättersee. It's also the obvious place from which to catch buses to Gmünd (see p.354), 15km to the north.

The Town

Surrounded by a small park, the centrally located **Schloss Porcia** was built over seven decades from 1527 onwards. Its inner courtyard, with three storeys of balustraded galleries held up by finely carved ionic and corinthian columns, is now a venue for theatre performances and concerts over the summer. Occupying the upper two floors of the Schloss, the **Museum für Volkskultur** (mid-April to mid-Oct daily 9am–6pm; mid-Oct to mid-April Mon–Thurs 1–4pm; €5) is divided up into thematically arranged rooms, devoted to such topics as education, religion, mining, village crafts and so on, each with explanatory texts in English. The atmospheric upper level of the museum, ostensibly the castle's attic, presents a visually provocative collection of farming machinery and recreated rural homes, whilst at the other end of the scale, the Fürstenzimmer contains the kind of Baroque and Rococo furnishings that might once have decorated the Porcia family home, as well as a portrait of the last of the Salamancas, Countess Catharina. According to popular myth, the miserly Catharina murdered a servant girl who had discovered the location of her secret horde of cash, and was condemned to wander the castle in ghostly form as a result. North of the Schloss, in the City Center shopping mall, the **Erlebniswelt Eisenbahn** (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–5pm; €6, combined ticket with Schloss Porcia; €9) proclaims itself the largest model-railway layout in the country, presenting a train-buff's vision of the ideal Austria – all mountains, tunnels, and ruined castles.

About twenty minutes' walk south of the town centre, the **Goldeckbahn** cable car (early June to mid-Oct and Dec–March; Ⓦwww.goldeck-spittal.at; €15.50 return) provides access to the 2142-metre Goldeck, which rises above the valley floor to the southeast. The cable car runs first to a middle station, from where there's a chairlift to the Bergstation, starting point for numerous trails, including the walk to the Goldeck summit just above. In the winter months, this is also the starting point for around 30km of skiing slopes popular with families, and with a couple of black runs thrown in; a day pass costs around €26. There's also a toll road (open May–Oct; €12 per vehicle) to a point just south of the summit, leaving the valley floor at the village of **Kamering**, 12km down the valley on the Villach road.

Practicalities

Spittal's **train** and **bus stations** are 500m southwest of the centre, on Südtirolerplatz. Walk down Bahnhofstrasse and head right across the Stadtpark to reach the **tourist office** (July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–8pm, Sat 9am–noon; Sept–June Mon–Fri 9am–6pm; Ⓣ04762/5650-220, Ⓦwww.spittal-drau.at), lurking on the far side of Schloss Porcia. You can book accommodation throughout the Millstättersee region here, as well as **private rooms** (❷) in Spittal itself. There's a decent **hostel**, *Goldeck Sports Academy* (Ⓣ0669/144144-66, Ⓦwww.sportsacademy.at; €18 per night), about 1km southwest of the train station, across the car park from the Goldeckbahn terminus.

Among the best of the B&B options is *Gasthof Brückenwirt*, An der Wirtschaftsbrücke 2 (Ⓣ04762/2772; ❹), with spacious en-suite rooms with a

downstairs restaurant serving excellent Carinthian food. **Hotels** include the perfectly placed *Alte Post*, Hauptplatz 13 (Ⓣ04762/2217, Ⓦwww.tiscover.com/alte.post; 6), which mixes modern facilities with a smattering of olde-worlde charm, and the more contemporary *Edlingerwirt*, Villacherstr 88 (Ⓣ04762/5150, Ⓦwww.boeg.at; 6), 2km east of the centre, on the way into town from the Spittal-Ost exit of the autobahn, with attractively-designed en-suites and satellite TV or there's a moderately good choice of eateries in town and a healthy sprinkling of bars, making Spittal a better bet for evening diversions than the lakeside resorts of nearby Millstättersee. For **food**, probably the best place to enjoy a good-value Carinthian *Nud'l* dish or a standard Austrian schnitzel is *Gösser Bräu*, a large brewery-owned restaurant with a sizeable beer garden just across the river from the centre at Villacherstr 5. *Goldener Ente*, Kirchgasse 5 (entry from Hauptplatz), is the best of the Chinese restaurants, with cheap lunchtime menus (from €4.50) on weekdays. *Zellot* (closed Sun & Mon), in the far western corner of the Hauptplatz next to the *Hotel Post*, is a top-quality though not too pricey restaurant with a wide range of traditional Carinthian as well as Mediterranean dishes and excellent choice of wines. If you're in driving mood, the *Kleinsasserhof*, in the village of Kleinsass on the hillside southeast of town (Ⓦwww.kleinsasserhof.at), combines rustic-cum-surrealist interior design with haute cuisine and traditional Carinthian food – most ingredients coming straight from the farm.

For **drinking**, *Konditorei Moser*, near the church at Jahnstr 7, serves up delicious cakes in wood-panelled rooms and also has summer-time garden seating. The *Glasshouse Café*, Hauptplatz 12, is nineteenth-century coffeehouse and twenty-first-century lounge bar all rolled into one, and even has a roof garden with a water sculpture. Cabaret, live music and DJ parties take place in the adjoining *Garage* club. An alleyway at Hauptplatz 3 leads to *K & K Hofcafé* (closed Sun), a cosy tunnel-shaped squeeze of a bar which is good for an evening drink; while the nearby *Gerry's Bernstein* at Ebnergasse 14 (closed Mon), serves up good beer and wines in a barrel-vaulted baroque interior. For a mildly alternative vibe, head for *Anno Dazumal* just opposite the train station at Bahnhofstr 19.

Seeboden and around

A five-kilometre journey from Spittal, **SEEBODEN** is a bustling little resort town at the western end of Millstättersee – even though the only attraction is the lakefront, and the hotels that serve it. There's a big municipal **Strandbad** at the northeast end of town, otherwise visitors tend to head for the village of **TREFFLING** in the hills to the north, where **Burg Sommeregg** provides a home for the popular **Foltermuseum**, or Museum of Torture (daily: May–June & Sept–Oct 10am–6pm; July & Aug 10am–8pm; €7; Ⓦwww.folter.at), which is about a 45-minute walk from the centre of Seeboden – head out of town on the Spittal road and turn right when you see the sign for Treffling. With its flashy lighting and grisly tableaux, the museum goes for titillation rather than education, though a display detailing the good works of Amnesty International is prominently situated near the entrance, suggesting some moral purpose to the collection. Before Maria Theresia and her son Josef II (who appear here in wax form) began the slow process of reform, torture had been a standard means of extracting confessions in Austria as elsewhere; methods illustrated here include the Saw, popularized by the Spanish Inquisition, which sliced people in half from the rump upwards, and the Iron Maiden, a metal human-shaped cabinet with sharp spikes on the inside, into which suspected miscreants were placed. Also on show are examples

of the grotesque, animal-like *Schandmasken*, or "masks of shame", which petty criminals were forced to wear before being paraded through the streets.

Practicalities

Spittal–Millstatt **buses** drop off near the **tourist office**, at Hauptstr 93 (daily: April, May & Oct 9am–6pm; June–Sept 9am–7pm; Nov–March 9am–5pm; ⓣ04766/3700, ⓦwww.millstaettersee.at), which handles information for the whole of the Spittal-Millstattersee region and can book **private rooms** (3) and **apartments** (5) around the lake. Of the local **hotels**, the *Moserhof* at Hauptstr 48 (ⓣ04762/81400, ⓦwww.moserhof.com; 7) offers attractive snug rooms with spa facilities in the basement. *Pension Elizabeth*, Steinerstr 43–47 (ⓣ04762/81701, ⓦwww.pension-elisabeth.co.at; 4), is a mid-priced bargain occupying a traditional, balconied house near the lake, offering rooms with en-suite facilities and TV, and an owner who organizes mushroom-picking hikes; while *Landhaus Ginner*, just off the main street at Seestr 27 (ⓣ04762/81216; 3), offers en-suite doubles and triples in a homely atmosphere. **Campsites** on the lakefront include *Strandcamping Winkler*, Seepromenade 33 (ⓣ04762/81822, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/seecampingwinkler), a big grassy site with bathing area and plenty of sporting activities.

The restaurant of the *Moserhof* is the best place to sample classic Austrian cuisine; while the *Landhaus Ginner*'s *Buschenschenk* (May to mid-June & July–Aug; evenings only) serves family-distilled Most (young cider) and schnaps accompanied by traditional cold-meat snacks.

Boats can be rented from numerous shacks along the Seepromenade; while *Fliegenpilz*, Süduferweg 125, offers a range of sailing and windsurfing courses, as well as renting out boards.

Millstatt

Four kilometres east of Seeboden, **MILLSTATT** is where Millstättersee tourism first took off in the mid-nineteenth century. The resulting building boom produced a spate of elegant lakeside holiday villas which, now transformed into hotels or family homes, lend the town a sedate, refined air. The historic **abbey** in the centre hosts an annual fix of high culture during the **Internationale Musikwochen** – from May to October, chamber music performances take place in the abbey, its courtyard and in the town's modern congress centre. Information and tickets can be obtained from Musikwochen Millstatt, Marktplatz 8, A-9872 Millstatt (ⓣ04766/2022-35, ⓦwww.musikwochen.com), or from the tourist office.

Various places along the lakeside promenade rent out boats. Wassersport Strobl, Seemühlgasse 56a (ⓣ04766/2263), is the main centre for hiring windsurfing, sailing and canoeing gear, and they also organize courses: expect to pay around €125 for a short windsurfing course (15hr over a 3- or 4-day period), or €150 for a basic sailing course (25hr over 5 days).

Stift Millstatt

Much the town's main feature, **Stift Millstatt**, just uphill from the lakefront, began life as an eleventh-century Benedictine foundation, but was handed over in 1469 to Emperor Friedrich III's **Order of the Knights of St George**. The Order's golden age came under Friedrich's son Maximilian I, who extracted enormous propaganda from his association with the cult of St George, who was regarded as a symbol of chivalry and courage. After Maximilian's death in 1511, the Order began to lose its importance, not least because its declared

foe – the Ottoman Turks – rarely came within skirmishing distance of Millstatt anyway. Emperor Ferdinand II gave the abbey to the **Jesuits** in 1612, in preparation for the re-Catholicization of what had become a predominantly Protestant area. They used the abbey's revenue to fund Graz University, and high taxes imposed on the local community led to a peasant rebellion in 1737 that was brutally put down.

Framed by an eye-catching pair of onion-topped towers, the **stiftskirche** (open daylight hours; free) still preserves a few Romanesque touches, notably the tympanum above the west porch, which depicts a donor presenting Christ with a model of the church. Within the church's delicately rib-vaulted interior, the imposing grave of the Order's first grand master, Johann Siebenhirter, is marked by a red granite relief in a side chapel over to the left as you enter. Though faded, Urban Görtschauer's sixteenth-century *Last Judgement* fresco, to the right of the high altar, is the best of the surviving gothic paintings. The monastery's small **Stiftsmuseum** (May–Oct daily 9am–noon & 2–6pm; Nov–April call to arrange a visit; ⓣ0676/4606-413; €2.50) contains ecclesiastical manuscripts, tombs of medieval clerics, and one of the three ornately decorated wedding chests of Paola Gonzaga, which contained her dowry at her marriage in 1477 to Leonhard von Görz, master of Schloss Bruck in Lienz (see p.359). The other two are displayed in the Domkirche in Graz (see p.277) and the Landesmuseum in Klagenfurt (see p.321). Beyond the museum lies the twelfth-century **cloister** (free access during daylight hours), whose arches are supported by pillars bearing delightful romanesque details, including curious, peering faces and fanciful frolicking beasts.

Practicalities

Buses from Spittal stop near the lakeside promenade, just below the abbey. Walk up through the abbey complex to reach the **tourist office**, on Marktplatz (April Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon; May Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 3–5pm; June–Sept Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat & Sun 9am–noon & 3–6pm; Oct–March Mon–Thurs 8am–noon & 1–5pm, Fri 8am–noon; ⓣ04766/2022-0, ⓦwww.millstatt.at), which will check vacancies in **private rooms** (2) in town or, if you have your own transport, in the rural suburb of **Obermillstatt**, which occupies a terrace of rich farmland to the north. The tourist office also has information on **apartments** by the lake or on hillside farms.

Other **accommodation** choices include *Haus Brigitte*, Grossdombra 18 (ⓣ04766/3051, ⓦwww.braeuhaus-bkk.at; 2), a small, family-run place overlooking Millstatt from the village of Grossdombra, 1km uphill to the north, a good choice if you have your own transport; take Kalvarienberggasse (which becomes Laubendorferstr) out of the Marktplatz to get there. Set back slightly from the lake in a villa-crowded residential street east of the Marktplatz, *Villa Waldheim*, Mirnockstr 110 (ⓣ04766/2061, ⓔvilla.waldheim@utanet.at; 3), represents good value for a taste of nineteenth-century atmosphere; it's a friendly, family-run place with creaking floorboards and Biedermeier furnishings. *Villa Margarethe*, Mirnockstr 72 (ⓣ04766/3259, ⓦwww.villa-margarethe.at; 3), is another pleasant pension in a villa of 1880s vintage (closed Sept–May) just east of the centre, by the lake with its own stretch of shoreline (also offers a few big family apartments). Most evocative and reasonably priced of the nineteenth-century villas on the lake, *Seevilla*, Seestr 68 (ⓣ04766/2102, ⓦwww.see-villa-tacoli.com; 5), has traditionally furnished rooms, a private bathing area, sauna and tennis courts. The nearest **campsite** is *Terrassencamping Pesenthein* (ⓣ04766/2665-44), on the lakefront 3km to the east.

There's little to choose between the generally excellent, and reasonably priced, hotel **restaurants** that line the lakeside promenade, most of which are also good places to sample the local freshwater fish with local trout and pike-perch predominating. The *Hotel Forelle* has a particularly nice waterside terrace. Though many close in winter, the restaurant of the *Hotel Seewirt*, slightly inland at Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Str 49, stays open year-round. Elsewhere in the town centre, *Pizzeria Pepino*, just across the way from the Strandbad, is an inexpensive and lively place that stays open until 11pm – by which time most other places have closed – and *Hotel Post*, Mirnockstr 38, offers high-quality Austrian cuisine in comfortable surroundings, as well as a good-value lunchtime buffet.

Best of the **drinking** venues are *Café Columbia* on Georgsritterplatz, a good choice both day and night, which also serves cheap pizzas and wonderful ice creams, and the *Villa Verdin* bar and restaurant on Seestrasse, a half-timbered gothic building which wouldn't look out of place in Transylvania and which has a nice lakeside terrace to boot. Late-night drinking takes place at *Monte Kristo*, right by the shore just off Kaiser-Franz-Jozef-Strasse, where the popular terrace is a great place to watch the sunset. *Bergwerk* (Ⓦwww.bergwerk-millstatt.at), built into the wall of the former abbey buildings, hosts alternative-rock and metal concerts throughout the year.

Gmünd and around

The Salzburg-bound A10 autobahn heads north from Spittal up the Liesertal, continuing onwards to the **Katschberg tunnel**, which marks the border between Carinthia and the Salzburger Land. The obvious place to stop off en route is the medieval townlet of **Gmünd**, 15km north of Spittal and served by frequent local buses. An engaging destination in its own right, Gmünd is also a good base from which to visit the **Maltatal**, a highland valley nestling beneath an eastern spur of the Hohe Tauern range.

Gmünd

Founded by the archbishops of Salzburg in the eleventh century to protect the trade routes that gave them a firmer hold on Carinthian life, **GMÜND** preserves much of its medieval character. Small, compact and traversed by cobbled alleyways spanned by little arches, it shelters a profusion of small galleries and craft shops, together with a brace of idiosyncratic museums.

Lined with medieval houses colourwashed in pastel shades, Gmünd's pretty Hauptplatz stretches from north to south, with the old town gates standing guard at each end. Alleyways lead westwards from the Hauptplatz to the building known as "Im Loch", a former jailhouse, which now holds the **Eva Faschaunerin Ausstellung** (June–Sept daily 10.30am–noon & 2–5pm; €2.90), a collection recalling the local murderer who was the last person to be executed in the district. Eva allegedly killed her husband, Jakob Kary Hörlbauer, on a March day in 1770, by putting arsenic – mined locally for use in the dyeing industry – in his supper. She was executed in November 1773. Telling her story through a series of tableaux and (German-language) texts, the museum serves as a powerful evocation of eighteenth-century Carinthian life. There's a re-creation of the kitchen where the dirty deed was done, and of the rack where she was tortured into confession.

A short distance south of the Eva Faschaunerin museum, the thirteenth-century **Pfarrkirche Maria Himmelfahrt** boasts the usual collection of

gilded Baroque altarpieces. Of greater interest, the **Karner**, or charnel house, outside is decorated with fourteenth-century frescoes depicting scenes of the New Testament, including a vibrant *Adoration of the Magi* in which Christ's manger is watched over by quaintly rendered farm animals. A few steps west of the church is the **Porsche-Automuseum** (daily: mid-May to mid-Oct 9am–6pm; mid-Oct to mid-May 10am–4pm; €7), a must for anyone who enthuses over cars, and an intriguing slice of history for anyone who doesn't. Assembled by local collector Helmut Pfeifhofer, the well-arranged exhibits document the output of the prolific Austrian-born designer Ferdinand Porsche. The oldest of the cars on show is the 1932 taxi built by Austrian firm Steyr, where Porsche worked as technical director. From 1934 he worked in Stuttgart on the development of the VW Beetle, but allied bombing forced Volkswagen to disperse their production facilities to more isolated locations in 1944, and Porsche and his design team relocated to the village of Karnerau, 2km north of Gmünd. They stayed here until 1950, though Porsche himself was imprisoned by the French for two years immediately after the war due to his work on military vehicles. It was in Karnerau that the classic Porsche 356 sports car was first built, several rare examples of which are on display.

Standing at the northern end of town on an easily scaled hillock are the remnants of the thirteenth-century **Alte Burg**, where representatives of the Salzburg archbishops once held sway. Habitable portions are occupied by a restaurant and café-bar, and rock and jazz concerts take place in the castle courtyard on summer weekends. Otherwise, it's a good place from which to enjoy views of Gmünd's tightly drawn web of streets below. Further north, 1km out of town beside the main Bundesstrasse, is the oddity known as the **Geteilte Kirche**, or divided church. Comprising two buildings divided by a country lane, the church began life as a small roadside chapel and became an increasingly popular shrine in the eighteenth century. Unfortunately, there was no space to enlarge it, so an additional building was constructed on the opposite roadside, allowing the priest to conduct services on one side while the congregation sat on the other.

Practicalities

Buses stop in the Hauptplatz, just opposite the **tourist office** at no. 20 (July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; Sept–June Mon–Fri 8am–5pm; ⓣ04732/2222, ⓦwww.familiental.com), which has a small number of **private rooms** (2) at its disposal. Best of the **hotels** is the *Kohlmayr*, Hauptplatz 7 (ⓣ04732/2149, ⓦwww.Gasthof-kohlmayr.at; 3), a lovely old *Gasthof* whose traditionally furnished rooms have en-suite facilities and TV. If it's full, *Gasthof Prunner*, Hauptplatz 15 (ⓣ04732/2187, ⓦwww.members.aon.at/prunner; 3), is a comfortable alternative.

For **food**, the *Kohlmayr* offers a range of Austrian cuisine at medium prices, while the *Alte Burg* in the castle itself offers a more bohemian setting with both local and international fare, and views onto the town, as well as being a good place to have a **drink**. *Café-Konditorei Nussbaumer*, also on Hauptplatz, is the town's main daytime coffee-and-cakes venue, while the *Café-pub* next door seems to take over in the evening.

The Maltatal

Heading northwest from Gmünd, a minor road ascends the **Maltatal** towards the **Kölnbrein Reservoir**, 32km away at the head of the valley. It's a popular route, largely because it provides access to some desolate alpine uplands in the shadow of the 3246-metre Ankogel and its foothills, but also because the

reservoir at the end boasts one of Austria's most impressive pieces of civil engineering, the **Kölnbreinsperre** (Kölnbrein Dam). Reaching the area is easy if you have your own transport, though the last 15km of the journey is via toll road, the **Malta-Hochalm-Strasse** (May to late Oct; 7am–6pm; €16 per vehicle). It's a highly scenic ride, as the narrow road negotiates tortuous switchbacks, passing through several tunnels along the way. Traffic lights control the flow of traffic by day in order to minimize the risk of collisions; they don't work between 6pm and 9am, when greater vigilance should be exercised.

The Hochalm-Strasse culminates beside the elegant curve of the dam, built in the 1970s to collect glacial waters from the ring of mountains that forms the Hohe Tauern range's easternmost spur. Above the dam sits the barrel-shaped **Panoramaturm**, a "panoramic tower" holding café, restaurant, four-star hotel (Ⓣ04783/2504, Ⓦwww.tauerntouristik.at; 3) and the **Tauernschatzkammer**, a small exhibition of crystals (free) that includes a film about the Hohe Tauern National Park and a ten-minute video telling the story of the dam's construction. Guided **tours** of the dam interior (May–Oct 2.30pm & 4pm, extra tours take place if it's suitably busy; €4.50) are worth considering for the eerie atmosphere that reigns within the dam wall, rather than the barrage of mind-boggling statistics about how many cubic metres of concrete were needed in order to build it. The tours last 45 minutes and are conducted in German, although guides might give an English summary if requested.

A broad track leads westwards around the reservoir from the dam, providing walkers with good views of the surrounding mountains. A popular walk suitable for the moderately fit day-tripper is the hike to the **Osnabrücker Hütte** (2hr one way), which lies just beyond the western end of the reservoir on the shoulder of the Ankogel. A slightly more demanding itinerary, involving steeper ascents, is the walk from the dam to the **Katowitzer Hütte** (3hr 30min one way), which lies on the slopes of the Hafnergruppe to the southeast. To pick up this trail, walk back down the Hochalm-Strasse from the dam for about 1km until you see a sign leading uphill to the left. Walking maps and information are best obtained from the **tourist office** right on the main road in the village of Malta, 7km north of Gmünd (July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 10am–2pm; Sept–June Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–4pm; Ⓣ04733/22015, Ⓦwww.maltatal.com).

Heiligenblut and the Grossglockner

Northwest of Spittal, both the main Salzburg-bound rail line and the A106 Bundesstrasse head up the Mölltal towards the imposing mountains of the **Hohe Tauern**. At **Obervellach**, a road splits off to the west and veers towards the Mölltal, climbing towards the chocolate-box alpine village of **Heiligenblut**, which shelters beneath Austria's highest peak, the **Grossglockner**. Both rail line and Bundesstrasse continue straight on from Obervellach towards the **Tauern tunnel**, emerging in the Gasteinertal and the Salzburger Land (see Chapter 7) on the other side.

Heiligenblut

One of the most attractively situated villages in the Austrian Alps, **HEILIGENBLUT** is little more than a narrow strip of houses clinging to the western slopes of a dramatic, steep-sided valley, with the snow-clad summit of the 3798-metre **Grossglockner** in the distance to the north. It's a scene dominated by the cream-and-ochre **Pfarrkirche St Vinzenz**, whose tall, slender spire seems to

mimic the peaks of the Glockner mountains behind it. Pictures of the church, with the snowy slopes of the Grossglockner glittering in the background, have featured on thousands of alpine calendars and postcards. The church was built by monks from Admont in Styria to hold a vial purported to contain the blood of Christ – hence the village's name, which translates as "holy blood". According to legend, the vial was brought to the area from Byzantium by St Briccius, who was consumed by an avalanche when attempting to cross the Alps, leaving the holy relic to be recovered by rescuers. It's now contained in a Gothic reliquary inside the church to the left of the high altar, an extravagantly pinnacled pillar of pale stone encrusted with statuettes of saints. The high altar itself, an early sixteenth-century affair featuring the Virgin flanked by saints Barbara and Catherine, is thought to be the work of Wolfgang Asslinger, a member of Michael Pacher's studio. It's a simple attractive piece of work, its wooden statuary gaily painted to look like porcelain figurines, and harbours a wealth of delightfully idiosyncratic detail – in the bottom right-hand panel, the Ascension is depicted by a scene of two bare feet disappearing upwards into a cloud. The rib-vaulted ceiling above the altar is decorated with paintings of a slender Virgin holding a Child, and symbols of the Evangelists.

Slightly uphill from the church, round the back of the *Gasthaus Schöber*, the **Hohe Tauern Nationalparkcentrum** (daily June–Oct 10am–5pm; ⓣ04824/2700, ⓦwww.hohetauern.at) gives away leaflets, sells maps and offers a small museum display on the park, including a series of short video films on the history of climbing on the park's most prominent peak, the Grossglockner. The mountain was first conquered in August 1800, when Count Salm, bishop of Gurk and an enthusiastic promoter of alpinism, led a 62-man expedition up the mountain. Salm himself only went as far as his steed would carry him, although a local priest, Pfarrer Horasch, accompanied by Heiligenblut farmers, carried on to the top. Early ascents tackled the gentler east slope of the mountain, and it wasn't until 1876 that the north face was conquered by Alfred Pallavicini, a Viennese army officer who later lost his life on the Grossglockner while trying to pioneer yet more difficult routes.

The slopes east of the village provide ample **skiing** terrain suitable largely for intermediates; a one-day lift pass costs €34; 6-days, including East Tyrol, €160 (see p.358); and some of the lifts that serve them are open in July and August for summer walkers. A cable car leaves the village centre (just opposite the *Hotel Post*) for the 1750-metre **Rossbach**, from where you can take another cable car to the 2600-metre **Schareck**, or a funicular through a tunnel to the **Fleisalm**, an area of alpine meadow below the 2989-metre **Gjaidtroghöhe** – a marvellous place to savour the crisp mountain air and up-close views of the Glocknergruppe, and to observe the twisting ascent of the Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse (see p.358).

Practicalities

The best place from which to approach Heiligenblut by public transport is Lienz (see p.359), which offers direct buses all year round. Spittal an der Drau is also a resonable jumping-off point, although you'll have to change at the village of Winklern. Buses stop just above the **tourist office** on the main street (July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 4–6pm; Sept–June Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–6pm; ⓣ04824/2001-21, ⓦwww.heiligenblut.at), where you can enquire about vacancies in **private rooms** (summer ❷; winter ❸), pensions and apartments. Cheapest **pension** in the centre is probably the *Bergkristall*, near the Rossbach cable-car station at Hof 71 (ⓣ04824/2025, ⓦwww.bergkristal-heiligenblut.at; summer ❸; winter ❹), which has some rooms with shared facilities, as well as more expensive ones with en-suite shower and WC. There are

plenty more good-value pensions down in the valley bottom: *Lagler*, Winkl 90 (Ⓣ04824/4103, Ⓦwww.lagler.at; summer ❸; winter ❹), and *Edelweiss*, Hadergasse 17 (Ⓣ04824/2083, Ⓦwww.pension-edelweissinfo; ❹), are two comfy, family-run B&B places. If you want a central **hotel** with all the creature comforts, the four-star *Glocknerhof* on the main street (Ⓣ04824/2244, Ⓦwww.glocknerhof.info; summer ❻; winter ❽) has four-star facilities and standards of service. There's a **youth hostel** just downhill from the centre, at Hof 36 (Ⓣ04824/2259, Ⓔjgh.heiligenblut@oejhv.or.at; reception open 7–10am & 5–10pm; closed Nov), and a **campsite**, *Nationalpark Grossglockner* (Ⓣ04824/2048, Ⓔnationalpark-camping@heiligenblut.at; open May–Oct & Dec–March), a few steps along from *Pension Edelweiss* on the valley bottom.

For **eating**, the *Dorfstube*, on the main street, features an inexpensive menu of Austrian dishes and pizzas, while the *Hotel Post*, opposite the cable car, has a much wider range of local cuisine at only slightly higher prices. The *Laterndl* on Dorfplatz is a cosy wood-panelled café-bar open for daytime and night-time **drinking** all year round; while the *Eisbär*, a glass igloo plunked at the edge of a sun-catching terrace at the south entrance to the village, is a popular winter après-ski venue.

The local **mountain guide** association, Bergführerverein Heiligenblut (Ⓦwww.grossglockner-bergfuehrer.at), organizes guided ascents of the Grossglockner (contact them through the National Park Centre; expect to pay in the region of €280 for one person, €450 for four people) as well as a range of other specialized ascents.

The Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse

The main excursion from Heiligenblut is to drive or journey by bus along the **Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse**, a scenic toll road (mid-May to late Oct; cars €28 day pass, or €45 month pass, motorbikes €18 day pass, €35 month pass, bus passengers pay a small fee included in the price of their ticket) that heads northeast from the village, rising above the Möll Valley towards the **Grossglockner Pass** (just east of the mountain similarly named), which marks the border between Carinthia and the Salzburger Land. It's a tortuous but spectacular ascent, allowing glimpses of the Grossglockner itself, a lofty white mass which occasionally pokes its head above the surrounding crowd of peaks. Most sightseers turn left a few kilometres short of the top to enjoy a side-trip along the **Gletscherstrasse** to **Franz-Josefs-Höhe**, an itinerary more fully described on p.417. One **bus** a day (three in July and Aug) serves the Franz-Josefs-Höhe, commencing in Lienz and passing through Heiligenblut on the way. Once there, you can pick up a connecting service to the lakeside resort of **Zell am See** (see Chapter 7) on the northern side of the pass.

East Tyrol

Separated from the rest of the Austrian Tyrol by Italy, the **East Tyrol** (Osttirol) is most easily approached from Carinthia, the Land with which it has the best public transport links. Despite possessing some of the most dramatic mountain scenery in Austria, the East Tyrol has, strangely, never enjoyed the same level of

tourist development as northern Tyrol or the Salzburger Land – and therein lies its appeal. Towns like the local administrative capital **Lienz** and villages like **Kals** and **Matrei** are perfectly equipped for skiing and walking, but are spared the large numbers of visitors that regularly descend on places like Seefeld, Mayrhofen and St Anton. To outsiders, the East Tyrol seems marvellously unspoilt, though locals have sometimes felt a little left out of the main currents of Austrian life. The separation of East Tyrol from the rest of the province, following the award of the South Tyrol to Italy in 1919, was a big blow for the region, producing feelings of isolation only partially alleviated by the building of the Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse in 1936 and the **Felber Tauern tunnel** in 1967.

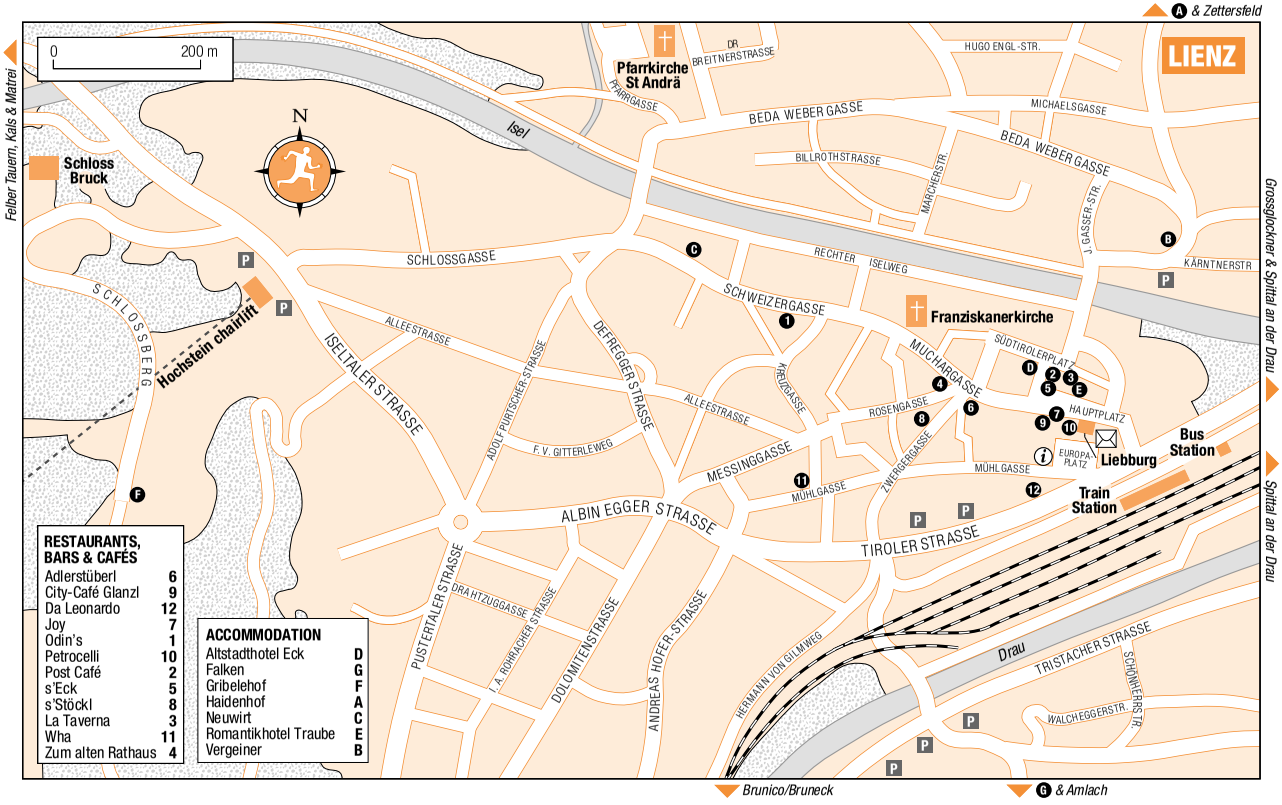
Lienz can be reached by rail either from Innsbruck in the west (with trains running through a corner of Italy to get here) or from Spittal an der Drau to the east. The Felber Tauern tunnel presents the region's main road link with Austria north of the Alps, with two daily buses making the journey here from Kitzbühel and Kufstein in northeastern Tyrol. It's also possible to get here from Zell am See via the Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse in summer, with bus passengers changing at the Franz-Josefs-Höhe.

Lienz

Standing at the confluence of the Drau and Isel, **LIENZ** sprawls beneath the ragged, hostile slopes of the **Lienzer Dolomiten**, strangely beautiful peaks that adopt a pinkish hue in the early morning sun. Located at the southern end of two important transalpine routes – the Felber Tauern and the Grossglockner Pass – the town has long been an important staging post for those travelling onwards to Italy. The Romans were the first to recognize this spot's potential, planting the settlement of **Aguntum** some 5km east of the modern town, near the village of Dölsach, where its scant remains can still be seen. Settled by German-speaking tribes in the ninth century, medieval Lienz enjoyed a brief period of importance as the seat of the powerful **counts of Görz**, from what is now Gorizia in Italy, until 1500, when the last of the counts, Leonhard, died without an heir. The territory then fell to Emperor Maximilian I, who incorporated Lienz and its environs into the Tyrol. Both **Schloss Bruck**, erstwhile residence of the counts

Skiing in the East Tyrol

Few of the places in East Tyrol are featured in the package-holiday brochures, so travellers intent on tackling the pistes here will have to make arrangements independently. **Lienz** is probably the most versatile base, with the **Zettersfeld** east of town providing plenty of terrain suitable for beginners and intermediates – descents of the Hochstein to the northwest prove more demanding. Lienz is also a big enough town to possess a modicum of nightlife. The same can't be said of the three main resorts to the north – **Matrei**, **Prägraten** and **St Jakob** – small villages that are nonetheless good for beginners and intermediates. **Kals** is an emerging resort suitable for beginners and families, with nursery slopes just outside the village and several hotels catering for small children. **Ski passes** for the East Tyrol's winter resorts are slightly cheaper than those elsewhere in Austria: expect to pay around €30 for one day (about half that for children). Combined Osttirol-Kärnten ski passes covering all the East Tyrolean resorts as well as a couple of other places in western Carinthia are available for one-and-a-half days or more, and cost €58 for one-and-a-half days, €166 for 6 days, and €256 for 14 days (again, half as much for children).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N
LIENZ
Schloss Bruck
Isel
Pfarrkirche St Andrä
DR. BREITNERSTRASSE
PFARRGASSE
HUGO ENGL-STR.
BEDA WEBER GASSE
MICHAELSGASSE
BILLROTHSTRASSE
MARCHERSTR.
J. GASSER-STR.
KÄRNTNERSTR.
RECHTER ISELWEG
SCHLOSSGASSE
SCHLOSSBERG
Hochstein chairlift
SCHWEIZERGASSE
Franziskanerkirche
ALLEESTRASSE
ISELTALER STRASSE
DEFREGGER STRASSE
ADOLF PUIRTSCHER-STRASSE
KREUZGASSE
SÜDTIROLERPLATZ
MUCHARGASSE
ROSENGASSE
HAUPTPLATZ
F.V. GITTERLEWEG
MESSINGGASSE
ZWERGERGASSE
MÜHLGASSE
EUROPA-PLATZ
Liebburg
Bus Station
Train Station
ALBIN EGGER STRASSE
TIROLER STRASSE
PUSTERTALER STRASSE
DRAHTZUGGASSE
A. ROHRACHER STRASSE
DOLOMITENSTRASSE
ANDREAS HOFER-STRASSE
HERMANN VON GILMWEG
Drau
TRISTACHER STRASSE
SCHÖNHERRSTR.
WALCHEGGERSTR.
RESTAURANTS, BARS & CAFÉS
Adlerstüberl 6
City-Café Glanzl 9
Da Leonardo 12
Joy 7
Odin's 1
Petrocelli 10
Post Café 2
s'Eck 5
s'Stöckl 8
La Taverna 3
Wha 11
Zum alten Rathaus 4
ACCOMMODATION
Altstadthotel Eck D
Falken G
Gribelehof F
Haidenhof A
Neuwirt C
Romantikhotel Traube E
Vergeiner B

of Görz, and the **Stadtpfarrkirche St Andrä**, where Leonhard was entombed, provide modern sightseers with a focus, although World War II air raids put an end to the town's other medieval remnants.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Both **bus** and **train stations** are on Tirolerstrasse, just southeast of the centre. Cross the street and head towards the modern flagstoned Europaplatz to your left in order to find the **tourist office**, at no. 1 (Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ04852/65265, ⓦwww.lienz-tourismus.at), which gives out free town maps and deals in a range of **private** rooms (❷), both in town and in the neighbouring villages of **Thurn** and **Amlach** (suitable if you have your own transport). They also sell the **Osttirol card**, which gets you free rides on all the cable cars in the region, as well as free entrance to most of the main sights and swimming pools. The card is valid for 8 days and costs €30.

Accommodation is relatively easy to find, although the town fills with Italians throughout August, making it difficult to find a bed. There's a **campsite**, *Komfort-Camping Falken*, Eichholz 7 (ⓣ04852/64022), in the fields 1km south of town. To get there, turn left out of the station, take the next left, pass underneath the railway tracks and carry on until you see the sign.

Hotels

Altstadthotel Eck Hauptplatz 20 ⓣ04852/64785, ⓔaltstadthotel.eck@utanet.at. Cosy old-fashioned place right on the main square. Not quite as posh as the *Traube*, but a worthy alternative. ❺

Falken Eichholz 1 ⓣ04852/71022, ⓔGasthof.falken@aon.at. In the fields south of town, next to the campsite of the same name, this place offers comfortable rooms with en-suite bathroom, TV and a small balcony. Buffet breakfast included. ❹

Gribelehof Schlossberg 10 ⓣ04852/62191, ⓦwww.gribelehof.com. Overlooking the town from a hillside to the west, this is a wonderfully situated traditional Gasthof whose simple rooms have en-suite facilities and balconies. To get there, take the road to Schloss Bruck and keep on going past the castle. ❺

Haidenhof Grafendorferstr 12 ⓣ04852/62440, ⓦwww.haidenhof.at. A relaxing, comfortable hotel, whose rooms all have en-suite facilities, satellite TV and telephone. Attractively located amidst fields on the hillside in the northern part of town. ❺

Neuwirt Schweizergasse 22 ⓣ04852/62101, ⓔneuwirt-lienz@aon.at. Downtown Gasthof with plain, functional rooms, all of which have en-suite shower and TV. There's a good buffet breakfast included in the price. ❹

Romantikhotel Traube Hauptplatz 14 ⓣ04852/64444, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/romantikhotel-traube. Top hotel in town, with all the creature comforts including an indoor swimming pool on the top floor. ❼

Vergeiner Kärntnerstr 19 ⓣ04852/62850 ⓦwww.pension-vergeiner.at. Family-run Gasthof on the northern side of the river. The plainly decorated en-suites are on the unexciting side, but most rooms have little balconies with flowerpots, and views of the Dolomites. ❹

The Town

Lienz's attractive, café-filled **Hauptplatz** is a good introduction to the laid-back ambience of the Austrian south. The customary parade of handsome, pastel-coloured town houses is enhanced by the presence of the **Liebburg** on the southern side, a sixteenth-century courtly residence (now the town hall) which sports an attractive brace of towers, topped by onion domes which look like a pair of squashed meringues. A few steps west along Muchargasse, the **Franziskanerkirche** harbours a few garishly restored Gothic frescoes, but it's better to head for the town's two major sights on the fringes of town.

The first of these is the **Stadtpfarrkirche St Andrä**, a ten-minute walk northwest from the centre to the other side of the River Isel, its slender spire-topped form picturesquely ringed by an arcaded cemetery. Inside are some

▲ Lienzer Dolomiten

impressive medieval frescoes, especially on the pillars lining the nave; one to the right as you enter shows a red-robed St Andrew on the cross, while another to the left carries a fourteenth-century cautionary image of Death trampling those who gorge themselves with meat during fasting periods. A red granite effigy of Graf Leonhard von Görz marks his burial place on the left side of the nave; above it, a late fifteenth-century *Journey of the Magi* in fresco form is filled with scenes of medieval pageantry. One of Leonhard's successors as lord of the local castle, Michael Freiherr von Wolkenstein, is honoured by a particularly touching piece of funerary sculpture on the opposite side of the church: Wolkenstein's head is inclined to one side to gaze fondly upon his wife, who is depicted beside him.

Set among the arcades outside the church, the **war memorial chapel** (key from Mrs Forcher, just across the square from the church at Pfarrplatz 13) contains starkly powerful frescoes executed shortly after World War I by local-born painter **Albin Egger-Lienz** (1868–1926), who is himself buried here. Born near Lienz (hence the adopted surname), Egger-Lienz was profoundly attached to his native Tyrol, portraying the sufferings of the region's peasantry in a hard, muscular style. He was also deeply affected by the Great War, having served on the Italian front, and his subsequent work was filled with spiritual pessimism. The mesmerizingly sombre cycle of paintings on display in the chapel is widely considered to be his masterpiece. The southern wall is dominated by a scene of Austrian infantrymen advancing under fire, their pale uniforms flapping around their limbs like shrouds, as if they're already dressed for the grave. On the opposite wall, a dead warrior lies atop a pile of grey coffins. This altogether bleak series is rounded off by the notoriously unsettling rendition of Jesus on the east wall: a sallow-skinned, emaciated figure whose skimpy loincloth leaves little to the imagination – a depiction which was considered so shocking that priests refused to celebrate Mass in the chapel until the 1980s.

A fifteen-minute walk due west from the Hauptplatz along Schweizergasse, the formidable grey-brown bulk of **Schloss Bruck** (May–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; ⓦ www.museum-schlossbruck.at; €6) overlooks the town from the partly wooded flanks of the Schlossberg. Outwardly, the tower, with its Romanesque windows, is the only sign of the castle's thirteenth-century origins; the rest of what you see was remodelled some two hundred years later. Inside, the castle interiors are used to host blockbuster exhibitions devoted to local history and culture – there's usually a different one every year. Works by leading Tyrolean painters – Albin Egger-Lienz included – are usually on display too. You can also visit the castle's chapel, with its fifteenth-century frescoes painted by Simon von Taisten for Count Leonhard von Görz. Leonhard and his wife, Paola von Gonzaga, feature prominently: they're shown kneeling in the depiction of the *Death of the Virgin*, on the left of the nave, as well as in the scene with St Elizabeth on the right, while also putting in an appearance with the *Madonna and Child* in the high altar.

Into the mountains

The jagged outline of the Dolomites provides an impressive backdrop to the town, but their upper reaches are inaccessible to all but the most experienced rock climbers. Most skiing and walking takes place on the more hospitable heights to the north, most notably the **Zettersfeld**, a large area of upland meadow served by cable car (mid-June to Sept & Dec–Easter; ⓦ www.lienzer-bergbahnen.at; €17 return) from the northern edge of town, at the end of Zettersfeldstrasse. At the top, a chairlift continues to the 2214-metre **Steinermandl**, starting point for walks up to the **Neualpseen**, a group of small mountain lakes surrounded by desolate moorland. In **winter**, there's a range of light to intermediate descents down the southern slopes of the Steinermandl: you can register for ski and snowboard lessons and hire gear at the bottom of the Zettersfeldbahn.

At the western end of town, next to the access road to Schloss Bruck, the two-stage **Hochsteinbahn** chairlift (mid-June to mid-Sept & Dec–Easter; €12 return) rises to the 1016-metre **Moosalm**, site of the **Venedigerwarte** viewing tower and a farmyard zoo for children, before continuing to the 1511-metre Sternalm, from where reasonably fit summer walkers can strike uphill towards the 2023-metre Hochsteinhütte above. As far as winter sports are concerned, the Hochstein boasts a couple of long unbroken descents that will appeal to intermediate and advanced skiers.

Eleven trains a day leave Lienz to head towards the Italian town of San Candido/Innichen (wwww.innichen.it) in South Tyrol. From here, a popular 30km cycle route heads downhill back towards Lienz through the mountains. Cycle maps are available from Lienz tourist office, and bike hire is available at Papin Sport (Ⓣ0039–474/913450, Ⓦwww.papinsport.com) in San Candido/Innichen right next to the train station. You can cycle the route, and return your bike to Lienz train station at the end of the day.

Eating and drinking

Notwithstanding a fair sprinkling of ethnic restaurants and typically Austrian *Gasthöfe*, **eating** out in Lienz is definitely a Tyrolean experience, with regional specialities like *Tiroler Gröstl* and *Schlipfkrapfen* dominating most menus. Proximity to Italy ensures a high standard of northern Italian cuisine, too: *Pizzadiele* on the Hauptplatz is a good place to pick up a pizza-slice **snack**. The outdoor cafés of the Hauptplatz help to turn **drinking** here into an almost Mediterranean experience in summer, and there's a wide choice of bars to boot.

Restaurants

Adlerstüberl Andrä-Kranz-Gasse 7. Lienz's oldest restaurant, a traditional Gasthof serving up a mid-priced range of Austrian and traditional Tyrolean food in atmospheric, medieval arched rooms. Seasonal specialities play a big part in the menu – expect asparagus in spring, game in autumn, goose on St Martin's Day, and so on… Mains in the region of €13–15.

Da Leonardo Tirolerstr 30. Providing you can ignore the salmon pink decor, this is an excellent pizzeria with an impressive selection of thin-crust pizzas, good pasta dishes and other Mediterranean delights, notably grilled calamari.

Haidenhof Grafendorferstr 12. Hotel restaurant north of town with mid-priced Tyrolean *Schlipfkrapfen* as well as the full range of Austrian dishes. The outdoor terrace provides a great view of the Dolomites on the opposite side of the valley.

La Taverna Südtirolerplatz 2. Inexpensive pizzas and pasta dishes served in wood-panelled, subterranean rooms.

Neuwirt Schweizergasse 22. In the hotel of the same name, this is a fine traditional Gasthof offering the full repertoire of Tyrolean/Austrian dishes, plus the odd vegetarian special. Fish dishes are a speciality, although what's on offer depends on what's fresh that day.

Zum alten Rathaus Johannesplatz 10 (Ⓦwww.goesserbraeu-lienz.at). Historic building given a modern interior makeover. Matt black surfaces and whitewashed walls provide a classy ambience in which to enjoy Austrian cuisine with a bit of modern style. Also a good place for an evening drink.

Bars and cafés

City-Café Glanzl Hauptplatz 13. Lienz's classic daytime coffeehouse and patisserie, with a wide range of cakes and cheap hot meals. The annexe in the neighbouring shopping mall is a popular stop-off point for lunch.

Joy Hauptplatz 9. Next to *Petrocelli* on the main square, this is one of the main weekend haunts in the middle of town, playing a good smattering of Indie and dance hits.

Odin's Schweizergasse 3. Popular, youth-oriented hangout with alternative-rockish music, a pool table in the back, and a nice sideline in toasted sandwiches.

Petrocelli Hauptplatz 9. Funky, upbeat daytime café – with a tempting range of sandwiches, crostini, and succulent prosciutto platters on offer – that turns into a temple of laid-back trendiness at night.

Post Café Südtirolerplatz 7. Quiet café down an alleyway just off the Hauptplatz, with a leafy garden courtyard. Cakes, pancakes and a few main-course dishes, and a relaxing ambience for either a daytime or evening drink.

s'Eck Hauptplatz 20. Best of the cafés with outdoor seating on the main square, this also has a refined upstairs café and a pub-like beer cellar in a lovely medieval space downstairs.

s'Stöckl Zwergergasse 2. Loud and friendly pub focused on a small circular bar, that fills up quickly on Fri nights.

Wha Kreuzgasse 3. Huge café-pub with a long well-stocked bar and a crowd-pleasing mix of alternative-to-mainstream background sounds. The whole of Lienz passes through here at least once per weekend.

North of Lienz

North of Lienz, the main road ascends the Iseltal towards the **Felber Tauern**, an important route that tunnels from south to north through the Hohe Tauern and emerges near Mittersill in the Salzburger Land (see Chapter 7). **Matrei in Osttirol**, a small skiing and hiking resort, is the main centre along the way, although many of the side-valleys feeding the Isel are equally deserving of a visit. On the eastern side of Matrei, a road up the **Kalsertal** leads to the picturesque village of **Kals**, which lies in the southeastern shadows of the Grossglockner.

Kals

From Huben, the road to **KALS** zigzags its way uphill from the Iseltal to the **Kalsertal**, an appealing subalpine vale strewn with wooden farmsteads and tumbledown barns. Properly speaking, Kals itself is the collective name for a grouping of three hamlets: Kals-Lesach, Kals-Ködnitz and Kals-Grossdorf. You encounter the rustic huddle of farms that calls itself **Lesach** 10km out of Huben – it's bypassed by the main road, but buses stop here. There's more in the way of facilities 2km further, in **Ködnitz**, site of the Kals tourist office, a couple of shops and the **Ruprechtskirche**, which boasts a sixteenth-century mural of the *Crucifixion* in a first-floor gallery. **Grossdorf**, barely 1km up the valley from Ködnitz, is where most tourist development has been concentrated, with a smattering of chalet-style hotels and plenty of farmhouses offering apartments. At the entrance to Grossdorf, the fourteenth-century **Georgikapelle**, a small whitewashed edifice dwarfed by its own spire, presides serenely over sheep-grazed pastures.

Into the mountains

It's Grossdorf that commands most of the routes into the mountains, with the two-stage **Glocknerblick** chairlift (June–Oct & Dec–Easter; summer €13.50 return; winter €32.50 day ticket) ascending to the *Bergrestaurant Blauspitz* on the heights west of the village, where views towards the Grossglockner to the northeast are the main draw. Eight kilometres north of Grossdorf up the Dorfertal, the café-restaurant at the **Kalser Tauernhaus** is another popular destination for both sightseers and walkers, where trails continue north up the Dabaklamm defile to the Dorfersee, with the Grossglockner to the right and the Granatspitze to the left. The road to the *Kalser Tauernhaus* lies within the Hohe Tauern National Park and is closed to private cars, but you can walk or take a taxi (contact Glocknertaxi; ☎0664/5219089) from Kals-Ködnitz.

The **Kalserglocknerstrasse** toll road heads eastwards from Kals-Ködnitz up to the **Gasthof Lucknerhaus**, about 5km distant, from where several trails lead up onto the slopes of the Grossglockner. The most important, climbing to the 3454-metre Erzherzog-Johann-Hütte (the highest mountain hut in Austria) on the southeast shoulder, is one for experienced walkers or those accompanied by a local guide.

Kals as a whole is a good base for mounting supervised assaults on the peaks of the Hohe Tauern: **mountain guides** can be contacted at Berg und Schiführerverein, Kals-Ködnitz 18 (end-June to Oct Mon–Sat 8.30–10.30am & 5–7pm, Sun 5–7pm; ☎04876/8263, ⓦwww.glocknerfuehrer.at), opposite the tourist office. A number of different trips are on offer, and an ascent of Grossglockner should cost from around €300 for one person, descending to €120 each if in a group of four. In the summer months, there's a branch of the **Hohe Tauern Nationalpark** in the same building as the tourist office, which is a good source of information on walking routes, and maps for the region.

Practicalities

The **tourist office** right by the church in Kals-Ködnitz (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 2–5.30pm, Sat 8.30am–noon; ⓣ04876/8800, ⓦwww.hohetauern-osttirol.at and ⓦwww.kalsamgrosglockner.at) will sort out **private rooms** and apartments throughout the area; late arrivals should be able to find a place by heading straight for Kals-Grossdorf and looking for "*Zimmer Frei*" signs. Of the various **hotels and pensions** nearby, the *Ködnitzhof*, Kals-Ködnitz (ⓣ04876/8201, ⓦwww.koednitzhof.at; ③), has adequate rooms, some en suite. The *Hotel Krone*, right by the Glocknerblick lift in Kals-Grossdorf (ⓣ04876/8241, ⓦwww.hotel-krone-kals.at; ③), is a well-appointed modern building with its own dinky swimming pool, and the *Jenshof*, Kals-Grossdorf (ⓣ04876/8520, ⓦwww.baby.at; ③), is a "baby" hotel complete with playground, baby-listening devices and babysitting facilities. Five kilometres uphill to the east, the *AlpenGasthof Lucknerhaus* (ⓣ04867/8555, ⓦwww.lucknerhaus.at; ③) is an ideal base for walking; you might feel a bit cut off here, but it does have a reasonable restaurant.

Two places near the bus stop in Kals-Ködnitz function as combined **eating and drinking** venues: the *Ködnitzhof*, which offers a respectable range of schnitzels, and *Café KK* nearby, which has acceptable pizzas.

Travel details

Trains

Klagenfurt to: Friesach (19 daily; 45min–1hr); Launsdorf-Hochosterwitz (10 daily; 35min); Maria Saal (10 daily; 10min); Pörtscach (every 20–30min; 15–20min); Salzburg (6 daily; 3hr 16min); St Veit an der Glan (19 daily; 15–20min); Velden (every 20–30min; 20–25min); Vienna (8 daily; 4hr); Villach (every 20–30min; 25–40min).

Lienz to: Innsbruck (4 daily; 4hr 30min); Spittal an der Drau (10 daily; 1hr).

Spittal an der Drau to: Lienz (10 daily; 1hr); Villach (25 daily; 25–35min).

Villach to: Klagenfurt (every 20–30min; 25–40min); Pörtschach (every 20–30min; 20–25min); Salzburg (10 daily; 2hr 50min); Spittal an der Drau (23 daily; 25–35min); Velden (every 20–30min; 10–15min); Vienna (8 daily; 4hr 25min).

Buses

Note that buses do not run on Sun, except for the Lienz–Heiligenblut service (see below).

Gmünd to: Maltatal/Kölnbreinsperre (mid-July to late Sept: Tues & Thurs only; 1 daily; 30min); Spittal an der Drau (11 daily; 30min).

Klagenfurt to: Graz (2 daily; 3hr 30min); Gurk (2 daily; 1hr 30min); Hüttenberg (Mon–Fri 6 daily; Sat 3 daily; 1hr 15min); Maria Saal (16 daily; 25min); Maria Wörth (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat 2 daily; 25min); Pyramidenkogel (July–Sept Tues & Thurs 1 daily; 30min); Reifnitz (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat 2 daily; 20min); St Veit an der Glan (Mon–Fri 17 daily; Sat 3 daily; 55min); Velden via Maria Wörth (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat 2 daily; 40min); Velden via Pörtschach (7 daily; 40min).

Lienz to: Franz-Josefs-Hohe (late June & Sept 1 daily; July & Aug 3 daily; 2hr 15min); Heiligenblut (Mon–Fri 8 daily; Sat 6 daily; Sun 3 daily; 1hr 10min); Kals (6 daily; 55min); Kitzbühel (3 daily; 2hr 20min); Kufstein (2 daily; 3hr); Lucknerhaus (summer only, 2 daily; 1hr 20min); Matrei (7 daily; 40min); Prägraten (8 daily; 1hr 10min); St Jakob (5 daily; 1hr 10min); Ströden (summer only, 3 daily; 1hr 15min); Staller Sattel (summer only, 2 daily; 1hr 40min).

Spittal an der Drau to: Franz-Josefs-Hohe (July & Aug 2 daily; 3hr 30min); Gmünd (Mon–Fri 12 daily; Sat 4 daily; 30min); Heiligenblut (change buses at Winklern; 3 daily; 2hr); Millstatt (17 daily; 30min); Seeboden (17 daily; 20min).

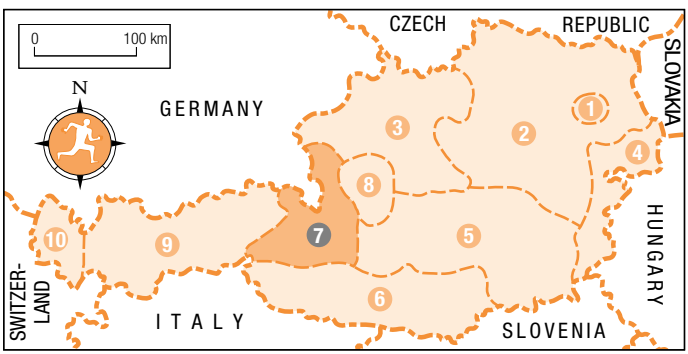
St Veit an der Glan to: Hüttenberg (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat 2 daily; 55min).

Velden to: Klagenfurt via Maria Wörth (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat 2 daily; 40min); Klagenfurt via Pörtschach (7 daily; 40min); Rosegg (Mon–Fri 4 daily; Sat 1 daily; 10min); Villach (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 4 daily; 30min).

Villach to: Drobollach (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 4 daily; 20min); Egg (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 4 daily; 25min); Faak am See (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 4 daily; 30min); Millstatt via Radenthein (4 daily; 1hr 20min); Ossiach & Ostriach (Mon–Fri 5 daily; Sat 2 daily; 30min); Pörtschach (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 4 daily; 50min); Velden (Mon–Fri 7 daily; Sat 4; 30min).

7

Salzburg and the Salzburger Land



CHAPTER 7

Highlights

- **Baroque Salzburg** From the cool splendour of the Italianate cathedral to the diminutive perfection of Fischer von Erlach's Dreifaltigkeitskirche and the bombastic grandeur of the Residenz, Salzburg is a Baroque jewel. See p.372
- **The Wasserspiele fountains, Hellbrunn** The ingenious tricks and puerile humour of this eighteenth-century pleasure garden bring a smile to even the stoniest faces. See p.390
- **The Sound of Music** Discover the many Salzburg locations from this kitsch classic. Altogether now, "The hills are alive…" See p.397
- **Eisriesenwelt** The world's largest ice caves are breathtaking, imaginatively lit and well worth the expedition to get there. See p.403
- **Hohe Tauern National Park** The spectacular peaks and the rich flora and fauna of this high alpine nature reserve repay closer inspection. See p.412
- **The Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse** Climb to the stunning views of the Pasterze Glacier by bike, car or bus along this spectacular mountain road. See p.417
- **Krimmler Wasserfälle** The ascent by foot is long and tiring on a warm summer's day, but to fully appreciate these wonderful waterfalls it's worth the effort. See p.418

▲ Salzburg

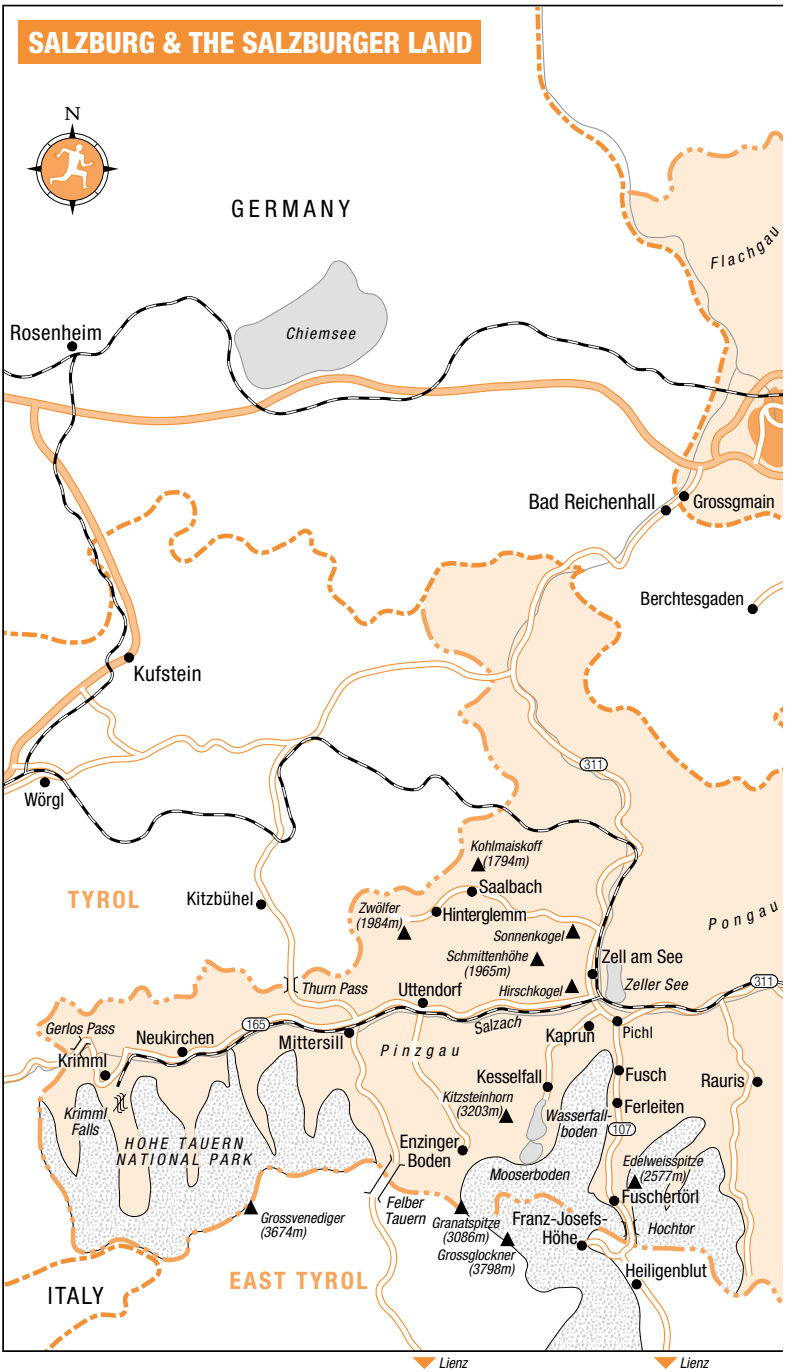
7

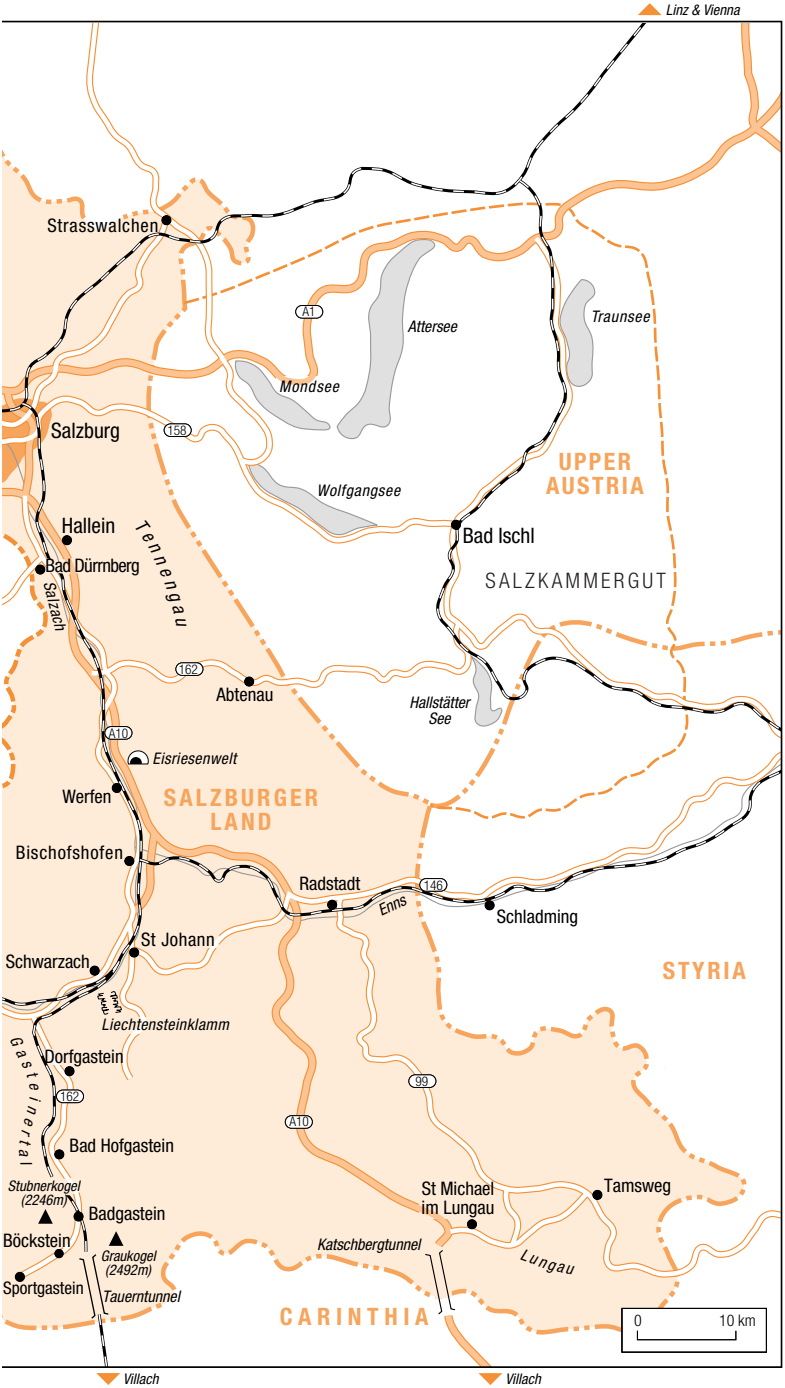
Salzburg and the Salzburger Land

The borders of **Salzburger Land** (Ⓦwww.salzburgerland.com) roughly correspond to the area ruled by the prince-archbishops of Salzburg up until the Principality's incorporation into Austria in 1816. The **River Salzach**, which rises in the Hohe Tauern range before flowing towards Salzburg, eventually joining the River Inn in Upper Austria, gives the area geographical cohesion; transport routes along the Salzach link the provincial capital, **Salzburg**, with much of its hinterland. For visitors, Salzburger Land offers a good mixture of the urban and the alpine, with the splendid Baroque capital proving the main focus for many. Music is an important draw in a city that was **Mozart's birthplace**, and the annual **Salzburg Festival** is a world-renowned feast of classical music and theatre. South of Salzburg, the narrow confines of the Salzach Valley provide a dramatic, mountainous setting for historic towns like **Hallein** and **Werfen**.

Winter sports are important in the **south**, with St Johann im Pongau, Badgastein, the Zell am See-Kaprun region and the package resort of Saalbach-Hinterglemm providing a wealth of white slopes. Many of these centres make good hiking bases in **summer**. A key destination for hikers is the **Hohe Tauern National Park**, which encircles Austria's highest mountain, the **Grossglockner,** which is also reachable by car on one of the Alps' most spectacular **drives**.

In the past, the Salzburger Land was divided into districts known as **Gaue** (*Gau* in the singular): the Flachgau north of Salzburg, the Tennengau to the south, the Pongau in the middle Salzach Valley, the Lungau in the far southeast, and the Pinzgau, which runs from Zell am See westwards along the Upper Salzach Valley. Each developed its own folkloric traditions still expressed in surviving **folk festivals**, which include the **Pongauer Perchtenlauf**, when costumed figures rampage through the streets of one of four Pongau towns (see p.404), **Krampus** festivities in Zell am See (see p.412), and the **Samsonumzug** in the Lungau town of Tamsweg, in which an effigy of Samson is paraded through the streets on important summer feast days (see p.406).


SALZBURG & THE SALZBURGER LAND
N
GERMANY
Flachgau
Chiemsee
Rosenheim
Munich
Munich
Innsbruck
Zell am Ziller
Bad Reichenhall
Grossgmain
Berchtesgaden
Kufstein
Wörgl
311
TYROL
Kitzbühel
Kohlmaiskoff (1794m)
Saalbach
Zwölfer (1984m)
Hinterglemm
Sonnenkogel
Pongau
Schmittenhöhe (1965m)
Zell am See
Thurn Pass
Uttendorf
Hirschkogel
Zeller See
311
Gerlos Pass
Neukirchen
165
Mittersill
Salzach
Kaprun
Pichl
Krimml
Pinzgau
Kesselfall
Fusch
Rauris
Kitzsteinhorn (3203m)
Wasserfall-boden
107
Ferleiten
Krimml Falls
HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK
Enzinger Boden
Mooserboden
Edelweisspitze (2577m)
Fuscherkarl
Felber Tauern
Granatspitze (3086m)
Franz-Josefs-Höhe
Hochtor
Grossvenediger (3674m)
Grossglockner (3798m)
Heiligenblut
EAST TYROL
ITALY
Lienz
Lienz


Linz & Vienna
Linz & Vienna
Strasswalchen
A1
Attersee
Traunsee
Mondsee
Salzburg
158
UPPER AUSTRIA
Wolfgangsee
Hallein
Bad Ischl
Tennengau
Bad Dürrnberg
Salzach
SALZKAMMERGUT
162
Abtenau
Hallstätter See
A10
Eisriesenwelt
Werfen
SALZBURGER LAND
Admont & Graz
Bischofshofen
Radstadt
146
Enns
Schladming
St Johann
Schwarzach
STYRIA
Liechtensteinklamm
Gasteinertal
Dorfgastein
162
99
A10
Bad Hofgastein
Stubnerkogel (2246m)
Badgastein
St Michael im Lungau
Tamsweg
Böckstein
Graukogel (2492m)
Katschbergtunnel
Lungau
Murau & Graz
Sportgastein
Tauerntunnel
CARINTHIA
0
10 km
Villach
Villach

Salzburg

Until 1816, **SALZBURG** was not Austrian, but an independent city-state ruled by powerful **prince-archbishops**. An ambitious and cultured bunch, they turned the city into the most Italianate north of the Alps, preserved to this day in the churches, squares and alleyways of the compact Altstadt spread beneath the brooding Hohensalzburg fortress. For many, Salzburg is the quintessential Austria, offering the best of the country's Baroque architecture, subalpine scenery and a musical heritage derived from the city's most famous son, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, whose likeness peers from every box of the ubiquitous chocolate delicacy, the Mozartkugel. Salzburg's luminous cultural reputation is perpetuated by the world-famous **Salzburger Festspiele**, a five-week celebration of opera, orchestral music and theatre that begins in late July, although there's a wide range of (not always Mozart-related) musical events throughout the year. In contrast, the memory of the Salzburg-based musical *The Sound of Music* clings to the city like a kitschy curse, with themed coach tours and shows providing an enjoyably lowbrow alternative to Salzburg's high culture.

Prosperous Salzburg also represents Austria at its most complacent; the city is politically "black" – a stronghold of the mainstream right-of-centre ÖVP – with an overtly bourgeois ethos easily discerned in the snooty cafés and boutiques of the city centre, and in a pre-Lent ball season that rivals Vienna. There's relief from snobbery, though, in the alternative nightlife and in the crowds at the football stadium – the local team, Red Bull Salzburg, is one of the few outside Vienna to enjoy a genuine mass following.

Salzburg buzzes all year round, so there's no "best" time to come. Spring and summer bring colour to the parks and surrounding hills, and this period draws the biggest crowds, although the **advent season** (from the end of Nov through to Christmas) is increasingly popular, with a Christkindlmarkt (Christmas market) around the cathedral, where stalls selling handicrafts jostle those peddling irredeemable tat, and kiosks dish out sausage, *Schmalzbrot* (bread and dripping) and Glühwein to keep the cold at bay.

Since there's no real low season, **accommodation** tends to be consistently overpriced, oversubscribed or both. Once you find somewhere to stay, you'll find the city's modest size makes it an easyplace to explore. The local bus and rail network enable forays into the **Salzkammergut** (see Chapter 8), and the historic towns of **Hallein** and **Werfen** to the south. It's also handily placed for much of southeast Germany: Munich is only ninety minutes away by train, and the scenic and historic attractions of the **Berchtesgadener Land** just across the border are heavily promoted in Salzburg.

Some history

Although Salzburg was important under both Celts and Romans (who called it Juvavum), it was the missionary activity of eighth-century Christians which really put the city on the map. Sponsored by Bavarians whowere eager to extend their influence into the area, Frankish monk **St Rupert** established a church here around 700 AD, using it as a base from which to evangelize to Germanic tribes in the Danube basin and neighbouring alpine valleys. He also presided over the foundation of a monastery and a nunnery on the heights (subsequently dubbed the **Mönchsberg** and **Nonnberg**) overlooking the city. The most illustrious of Rupert's early successors was the Irish monk and

missionary **St Virgil**, who extended the influence of the bishopric as far as Carinthia in the southeast during the second half of the eighth century. Accorded the status of **princes** by the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf of Habsburg in 1228, the city's ecclesiastical rulers were also major feudal landowners, administering territories scattered over present-day Austria, southern Germany and northern Italy. Additionally, the city's position on the River Salzach gave it a controlling influence on the transport of **salt** from the mines at Hallein, and it was from this that Salzburg's prince-archbishops obtained much of their wealth – salt revenues helped **Archbishop Leonhard von Keutschach** (1495–1519) transform the Hohensalzburg fortress into the impressive monument you see today. The city's Baroque appearance owes most to the ambitions of **Archbishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau** (1587–1612), a great-nephew of Pope Pius IV, who purposefully recast Salzburg on the model of Rome, employing artists and craftsmen from south of the Alps to do so. A worldly figure whose love affair with Salome Alt was an open secret, Wolf Dietrich quarrelled with Bavaria over salt revenues in 1612. His defeat led to his overthrow and imprisonment in the Hohensalzburg, where he died in 1617. The transformation of the city was continued by his successors **Marcus Sitticus von Hohenems**, who began the construction of the cathedral and his own pleasure-palace at Schloss Hellbrunn, and **Paris Lodron**, responsible for the archiepiscopal city-centre palace, the Residenz. Paris Lodron kept Salzburg out of the religious and dynastic turmoil of the Thirty Years War, initiating a massive fortification programme to secure the city's independence from predatory neighbours like Austria and Bavaria. Neutrality brought further prosperity, and fine buildings: **Johann Ernst von Thun** (1687–1709) was an early patron of Austria's outstanding eighteenth-century architect **Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach** (1656–1723), who was responsible for two of the city's finest churches, the Dreifaltigkeitskirche and Kollegienkirche.

The old central Europe of semi-feudal statelets to which Salzburg belonged was largely swept away by Napoleon, with the last of the prince-archbishops, Hieronymus Graf Colloredo, fleeing to Vienna in 1800 as French troops prepared to take the city. After a brief period of Bavarian rule, Salzburg was awarded to Austria by the **Congress of Vienna** in 1816. For much of the nineteenth century, the city was a declining provincial centre. However, the founding of the **Mozarteum** in 1870 helped put it back on the cultural map. Serving as a music school of growing repute and an important archive of Mozart's works, the Mozarteum initiated various small-scale musical festivals that were grouped together in 1920 to form the backbone of the **Salzburger Festspiele**.

Salzburg remained in Vienna's shadow until after World War II, when a booming economy and the growth of tourism helped generate the prosperity that's so evident today. The success of the 1965 film *The Sound of Music* projected the image of a beautiful town surrounded by wholesome alpine scenery to a massive international audience. Nowadays Salzburg receives an annual average of 36 tourists per inhabitant, putting it in the same league as Florence or Venice in the ratio of visitors to locals, and thus, though its charms are indisputable, you're unlikely to enjoy them in anything remotely resembling solitude.

Arrival, information and transport

Salzburg is divided by the River Salzach into the **linkes Salzachufer** (left bank), to the west, and the **rechtes Salzachufer** (right bank), in the east. On the left bank, the **Altstadt** holds the concentration of historic sights, though

Vienna, Munich, Innsbruck & Salzburg-Mitte Autobahn Junction

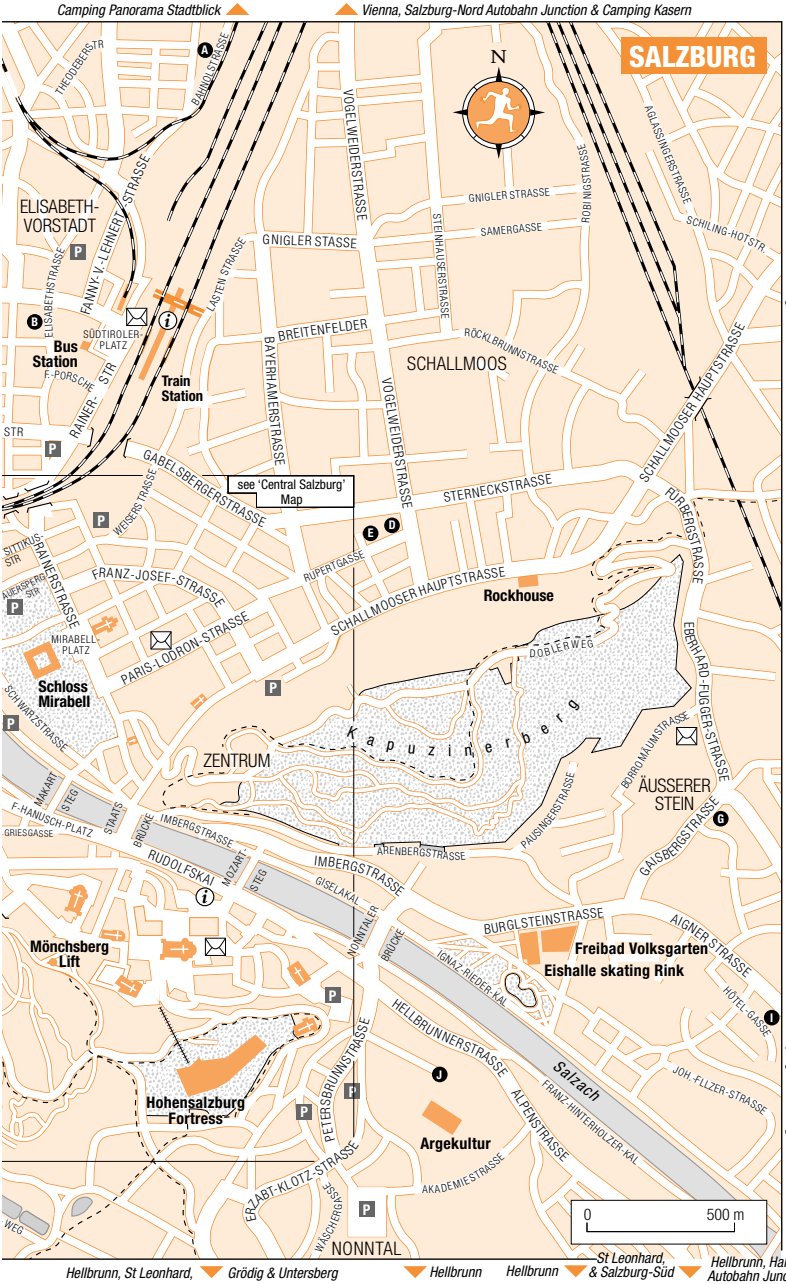
Hangar 7

Airport, Grossgmain, Innsbruck, Munich & Salzburg-West

Grödig & Untersberg

ACCOMMODATION

Adlerhof	B
Auerhahn	A
Bergland	E
Haus Wartenberg	H
Jedermann	D
Jugendgästehaus Salzburg	J
Junge Hotels Aigen	I
Jugendherberge Haunspergstrasse	C
Schloss Mönchstein	F
Vienna	G


SALZBURG
N
Camping Panorama Stadtblick
Vienna, Salzburg-Nord Autobahn Junction & Camping Kasern
St Gilgen
Camping Schloss Aigen
ELISABETH-VORSTADT
Bus Station
Train Station
SCHALLMOOS
see 'Central Salzburg' Map
Rockhouse
Schloss Mirabell
ZENTRUM
Kapuzinerberg
ÄUSSERER STEIN
Mönchsberg Lift
Freibad Volksgarten
Eishalle skating Rink
Hohensalzburg Fortress
Argekultur
NONNTAL
Salzach
0
500 m
Hellbrunn, St Leonhard, Grödig & Untersberg
Hellbrunn
Hellbrunn
St Leonhard, & Salzburg-Süd
Hellbrunn, Hallein Autobahn Junction

most points of arrival are across the river. Central Salzburg is compact, and it's easy to get around on foot.

The tatty **Hauptbahnhof** – scheduled for a major revamp – is north of the centre on Südtirolerplatz, a 25-minute walk from the Altstadt (buses #1, #3, #5, #6 and #25 run from the station to Mirabellplatz and beyond to Theatergasse on the right bank and F-Hanusch-Platz, Rathaus or Rudolfskai, on the fringes of the Altstadt). The main **bus station** is in front of the train station, although many services also stop on Mirabellplatz, nearer the centre. Salzburg's **W.A. Mozart Airport** (Ⓦwww.salzburg-airport.com) is 3km west of the centre on the Innsbrücker Bundesstrasse. Bus #2 runs from the airport to Südtirolerplatz (every 30min: Mon–Thurs 5.36am–11.16pm & Fri–Sun 5.36am–12.30am.

Information

The main **tourist office** is in the heart of the Altstadt at Mozartplatz 5 (May to mid-Oct daily 9am–7pm; mid-Oct to April Mon–Sat 9am–6pm, daily during Advent and New Year; ⓣ0662/88987-330 Ⓦwww.salzburginfo.at), but the first port of call for many new arrivals is the **information kiosk** on platform 2A of the train station (daily: April & Oct 9am–7pm; May–Sept 9am–8pm; Nov–March 9am–6pm).

The tourist offices provide **free brochures** in English and will book you into a hotel or pension for a nominal fee. They also sell a **Salzburg Card**, which gives free access to the majority of city museums and attractions, as well as unlimited use of city transport (June–Oct €23 for 24hr, €31 for 48hr, €36 for 72hr; rest of year €21 for 24hr, €29 for 48hr, €34 for 72hr) – it's worth the investment if you're visiting more than a couple of attractions a day.

City transport

Most of Salzburg's sights are within walking distance of each other (and the Altstadt is largely pedestrianized), but the municipal **bus network** (Ⓦwww.stadtbus.at) is a good way of getting to further-flung attractions such as Hellbrunn or the Untersberg.

The most important nodal points for public transport are **Südtirolerplatz**, in front of the train station, **Mirabellplatz**, just south of the station, and **F-Hanusch-Platz**, on the left bank on the fringes of the Altstadt. **Tickets** for single journeys cost €1.60, but it makes sense to purchase a **24-Stundenkarte** (24hour ticket; €3.40) or a week's **Wochenkarte** (€12.40), available from automatic vending machines next to major bus stops, from 130 *Trafik* kiosks or, at higher prices, from the driver. The Salzburg Card, sold at the city's tourist offices (see above), is also worth considering if you're visiting lots of attractions. **Night buses** depart in most directions from the Rathaus, Hanuschplatz or Theatergasse on Friday and Saturday nights until 12.45am; they connect with late **Lokalbahn** trains departing from the Hauptbahnhof. There is also a late night **BusTaxi** service departing from Theatergasse or Hanuschplatz along eight fixed routes (11.30pm–1.30am weekdays; until 3am weekends) and serving both Salzburg and the surrounding communities.

Accommodation

Accommodation in Salzburg tends to be more expensive than elsewhere in Austria except Vienna, and places fill up fast in peak season, so it's best to book

well in advance. If you arrive without a reservation, the tourist offices will find you a hotel room for a fee of €2.20 (plus a deposit of twelve percent of the room price), but late arrivals may find the only remaining vacancies are far from the centre. Tourist offices can also find you a **private room** (9), although most are in outlying suburbs, so check accessibility before accepting one.

Salzburg's **campsites** are on the outskirts, though none is more than a bus ride from the Altstadt. *Camping Kasern*, Carl-Zuckmayer-Str 26 (☎0662/450576, ⓦwww.camping-kasern-salzburg.com; late April to mid-Oct), is 4km north of town, just north of the Salzburg-Nord exit of the A1 autobahn. Bus #21 from Mirabellplatz passes by. Slightly closer to town is *Camping Panorama Stadtblick,* just south of the autobahn at Rauchenbichlerstr 21 (☎0662/450652, ⓦwww.panorama-camping.at; bus #3 from Hauptbahnhof, open late March to early Nov, Dec 5–7 & Dec 28–Jan 6). South of the centre, *Camping Schloss Aigen,* Weberbartlweg 20 (☎0662/633089, ⓦwww.campingaigen.com; bus #7 from F. Hanusch-Platz; open May–Sept), is on the very fringe of the urban area but still within easy travelling distance of the centre.

Hotels and pensions

The Altstadt and the Linzergasse area across the river contain any number of comfortable **hotels**, although rates can be high, especially for those with any historical pedigree. Budget and mid-priced hotels or pensions within walking distance of the sights do exist, but they fill up quickly.

Left Bank

Blaue Gans Arthotel Getreidegasse 43 ☎0662/842 4910, ⓦwww.blauegans.at. Recent renovations at this elegant boutique-style hotel have enlarged some rooms. Decor is modern, with gothic touches reflecting the hotel's fifteenth-century origins. 9

Goldener Hirsch Getreidegasse 37 ☎0662/8084-0, ⓦwww.goldenerhirsch.com. Opulent, atmospheric inn of medieval origin; the classic address in the Altstadt. Prices start at €460 for a double in the festival season; breakfast is extra. 9

Haus Wartenberg Riedenburgerstr 2 ☎0662/848400, ⓦwww.hauswartenberg.com. Pleasantly rustic pension (if you don't mind the Christian trappings), west of the centre behind the Mönchsberg. Rooms have en-suite facilities. 5

Hinterbrühl Schanzlgasse 12 ☎0662/846798, ⓦwww.fam-wagner.at. Good value, if rather plain pension on the eastern edge of the Altstadt below Nonnberg. Most rooms have shared facilities. 3

Schloss Mönchstein Mönchsberg-Park 26 ☎0662/848555-0, ⓦwww.monchstein.com. Intimate hilltop villa-hotel offering extremely plush accommodation in idyllic surroundings. Room rates start at €335 for a double outside the festival season. 9

Weisse Taube Kaigasse 9 ☎0662/842404, ⓦwww.weissetaube.at. Pleasantly old-fashioned hotel close to Mozartplatz. Comfy rooms are all en suite; some are recently refurbished. 7

Wolf Kaigasse 7 ☎0662/843453-0, ⓦwww.hotelwolf.com. Small, family-run place on a narrow street off Mozartplatz, with smallish but characterful rooms, all with private bath and simple, attractive decor. 7

Right bank

Adlerhof Elisabethstr 25 ☎0662/875236, ⓦwww.gosalzburg.com. Immaculate hotel near the train station, with quaintly furnished, traditional rooms plus a few cheaper ones without en-suite facilities. Triples and quads too. 4

Amadeus Linzergasse 43–45 ☎0662/871401, ⓦwww.hotelamadeus.at. Popular sightseeing base in the pedestrian zone, with tastefully furnished, en-suite rooms mixing antiques and modern decor, plus comfortable, good-value 4-bed apartments. 9

Auerhahn Bahnhofstr 15 ☎0662/451052, ⓦwww.auerhahn-salzburg.at. Pleasant, if not very central place north of the railway station, with a well-regarded restaurant and bright, simple rooms with TV, WC and shower. 5

Bergland Rupertgasse 15 ☎0662/872318, ⓦwww.berglandhotel.at. Handy for the Linzergasse, *Bergland* is a friendly, characterful family-run pension offering wireless Internet and an English-language library. Rooms are en suite. 6

Jedermann Rupertgasse 25 ☎0662/873241-0, ⓦwww.hotel-jedermann.com. Starkly modern, non-smoking boutique hotel, with stylish rooms, web access and a courtyard garden. 8

Markus Sittikus Markus-Sittikus-Str 20 ⓣ0662/871121-0, ⓦwww.markus-sittikus.at. Smart four-star hotel near the Mirabellgarten, with comfortable, individually decorated rooms ranging from enjoyably kitsch to stylish. 7

Pension Junger Fuchs Linzergasse 54 ⓣ&ⓕ0662/875496. About as cheap a pension as you'll find within easy walking distance of the Altstadt. 2

Sacher Salzburg Schwarzstr 5–7 ⓣ0662/88977-0, ⓦwww.sacher.com. This palace hotel was built in the nineteenth century to attract the social cream of Europe. Although much changed, some period details exist; rooms and service are top-notch. 9

Schwarzes Rössl Priesterhausgasse 6 ⓣ0662/874426, ⓦwww.academiahotels.at. Creaky, attractive old building, serving as student accommodation during the academic year, but offering comfy, if plain, rooms from July to Sept. A few have private bath; most share facilities. 4

Trumer Stube Bergstr 6 ⓣ0662/874776, ⓦwww.trumer-stube.at. Friendly pension in a good location, with cosy, comfortable en-suite rooms. 8

Wolf Dietrich Wolf-Dietrich-Str 7 ⓣ0662/871275, ⓦwww.salzburg-hotel.at. A top-notch, reasonably central hotel with an indoor pool and spa, and pretty good value for its class. 7

Hostels

Institut St Sebastian Linzergasse 41, entrance through archway off Linzergasse ⓣ0662/871386, ⓦwww.st-sebastian-salzburg.at. Evocatively sited Catholic hostel next to St Sebastian's church. No curfew. 3.

Jugend- und Familiengästehaus Salzburg (HI) Josef-Preis-Allee 18 ⓣ0662/842670-0, ⓦwww.jgh.at. Large modern hostel, popular with groups, immediately southeast of the Altstadt. Bus #5 from the train station. Check-in open 24 hours. Dorms and some doubles 4.

Junge Hotels Aigen (HI) Aignerstr 34 ⓣ0662/623248, ⓦwww.lbsh-aigen.at. Swish hostel in a quiet, suburban location, 2km from the sights. From the train station, take bus #6 to Volksgarten, from where it's a short walk. 4- and 6-bed dorms plus doubles 3.

Jugendherberge Haunspergstrasse (HI) Haunspergstr 27 ⓣ0662/875030, ⓦwww.lbsh-haunspergstrasse.at. Student place west of the train station, open July & Aug. Beds in 4- and 6-person dorms; also singles and doubles 3.

Naturfreundehaus Stadtalm Mönchsberg 19c ⓣ0662/841729, ⓦwww.diestadtalm.com. Marvellously situated, refurbished hostel overlooking the Altstadt. Take bus #1 from the train station to the Mönchsbergaufzug stop, then take the Mönchsberg lift, or walk up from Toscaninihof (not recommended if you're heavily laden). 4- or 6-bed dorms or doubles. 1

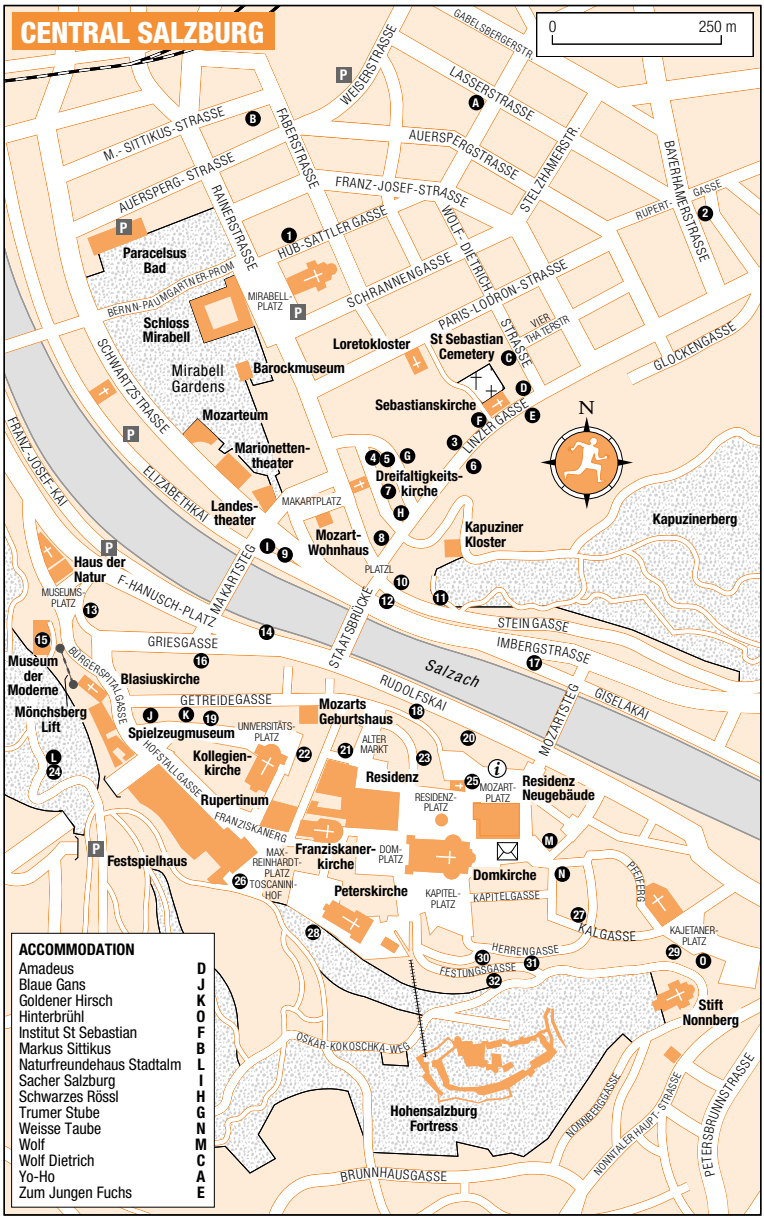
Yo-Ho Paracelsusstr 9 ⓣ0662/879649, ⓦwww.yoho.at. Big, lively place between the train station and main sights, popular with English-speaking backpackers, with bar, Internet access and no curfew. Basic 6- to 8-person dorms, 4-person dorms, singles and doubles 2.

The City

Salzburg's central ensemble of archiepiscopal buildings on the left bank forms a tight network of alleys and squares, watched over by the sombre medieval **Hohensalzburg** castle. Most of Salzburg's galleries and museums (including **Mozart**'s birthplace) are concentrated in this area, as are many of its **cafés**. From here it's a short hop over the River Salzach to a narrow ribbon of sights on the right bank, where another of Mozart's residences, and the flowerbeds of the **Mirabellgarten**, are the main draws. You could cover a lot of ground in a day, although you'll need two or three days if you want to explore the sights in any great detail.

The left bank

Salzburg's **Altstadt** represents one of the best examples of Baroque town planning anywhere in Europe. Archbishop Wolf Dietrich was responsible for initiating the transformation, engaging Venetian Vincenzo Scamozzi to draft plans for an ensemble of fountains, squares and public buildings centred on a new cathedral after the previous church was destroyed by fire in 1598. Even though the archbishop never lived to see its completion (he was deposed in 1612), the



ACCOMMODATION

Amadeus	D
Blaue Gans	J
Goldener Hirsch	K
Hinterbrühl	O
Institut St Sebastian	F
Markus Sittikus	B
Naturfreundehaus Stadtalm	L
Sacher Salzburg	I
Schwarzes Rössl	H
Trumer Stube	G
Weisse Taube	N
Wolf	M
Wolf Dietrich	C
Yo-Ho	A
Zum Jungen Fuchs	E

RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS & BARS

An Bing	23	Die Weisse	2	Kaffeehäferl	19	Shakespeare	1	Stieglkeller	32
Bar-Café Diva	4	Fischkrie	14	Mönchsberg 32	15	Shamrock	18	Stiftskeller St Peter	28
Bazar	9	Fridrich	11	Pepe	10	St Paul's Stub'n	31	Tomasselli	21
Bazillus	17	Gäblerbrau	8	Republic	13	Stadtalm	24	Vis-à-vis	20
Demel	25	Il Centro Il	3	Resch & Lieblich	26	Stadtkrug	6	Weisses Kreuz	30
				Schnaitl Pub	5	Sternbräu	16	Zipfer Bierhaus	22
								Zum Fidelen Affen	7
								Zur Glocke	29
								Zweistein	12
								Zwettler's	27

present-day cityscape is still very much Scamozzi's. World War II damage to the Altstadt was more extensive than you might think, but deft postwar restoration disguised the scars with skill.

The Getreidegasse and Mozarts Geburtshaus

Baroque Salzburg was grafted onto an earlier, medieval city of narrow streets and squat town houses, and it's this that tourists see on first entering the Altstadt across the **Staatsbrücke**, main crossing point over the River Salzach. After passing under the archway of the fifteenth-century **Rathaus**, a right turn leads into the pedestrianized **Getreidegasse**, Salzburg's busiest thoroughfare, thronged with visitors at any time of year, lined with opulent boutiques and characterized by overhanging wrought-iron shop signs. At no. 9 is **Mozarts Geburtshaus** (daily: July & Aug 9am–7pm; Sept–June 9am–6pm; €6), where the musical prodigy was born on January 27, 1756, and lived for the first seventeen years of his life. These days the house is under more or less constant siege from visitors, but it nevertheless has a feeling of antiquity that the rebuilt Wohnhaus (see p.388) inevitably lacks, while some of the artefacts on show – such as the baby-sized violin Mozart used as a small child – are sure to thrill. Among the more touching portraits on show is Johann Nepomuk della Croce's 1781 painting of Wolfgang and sister Nannerl playing the piano together, with a picture of their (by then, dead) mother hanging on the wall behind them. On the third floor, the room in which Mozart was born is the centrepiece of an installation by the American director and set and lighting designer Robert Wilson, which combines modern sound and light effects with original items from the museum's collection.

Mozartplatz and the Residenzplatz

Judengasse, the eastern extension of Getreidegasse, funnels crowds into the **Mozartplatz**, home to a weathered bronze statue of the composer by Munich sculptor Ludwig Schwanthaler. In contrast to the impish, bewigged youth familiar from chocolate boxes, Mozart is here more dignified and adult in a flowing, toga-like overcoat. The statue was erected in 1842, as the city began to promote itself to visitors through its association with the composer.

The square is overlooked by the grey tower of the **Residenz Neugebäude**, which houses the **Glockenspiel**, an early eighteenth-century musical clock whose chimes attract crowds at 7am, 11am and 6pm, and since 2007 the **Salzburg Museum** (July–Aug & Dec daily: Mon–Wed & Fri–Sun 9am–5pm, Thurs 9am–8pm; rest of year Tues, Wed & Fri–Sun 9am–5pm, Thurs 9am–8pm; €7), which presents the city's historical and artistic collections in a new setting. The basement Kunsthalle and the Säulenhalle or pillared hall on the ground floor are the setting for changing art exhibitions, while the museum's permanent exhibitions are housed on the first and second floors. The first of these, **Salzburg Persönlich**, charts the lives, works and influences of individuals from Salzburg's history in the fields of art, architecture, science, literature, music, photography, handicrafts, trades and the world of work; the figures depicted include the sixteenth century medical pioneer Paracelsus (see p.387), who briefly set up a healing practice nearby at Pfeifergasse 11, and the dancer Friderica Derra de Moroda. She debuted in 1912 as a dancer at the Secession in Vienna, later opening a ballet school in London and founding a ballet troupe under the aegis of the Nazis' Strength Through Joy programme. On the second floor, the **Residenz Neugebäude's** splendid ceremonial rooms house **Mythos Salzburg**, which traces the history of Salzburg as a cultural, political and artistic phenomenon from early modern times, with sections cataloguing Wolf Dietrich's

Mozart: the Salzburg years

It's ironic that so much of Salzburg's tourist industry revolves around a man who felt so stifled by his native city that he couldn't wait to leave. Born the son of Leopold Mozart, a member of the archbishop of Salzburg's chamber orchestra and a respected expert on violin technique, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756–91) was recognized early on as a prodigy, learning the piano at the age of 3, teaching himself the violin, and embarking on rudimentary compositions by the age of 5, though these were heavily revised by his father. Mozart's sister Maria-Anna ("Nannerl"), five years older, was equally precocious, providing Leopold with a child-prodigy package to tour the courts of Europe for financial reward. Between 1762 and 1771 the family was almost constantly on the road, visiting Munich, Vienna, Pressburg (now Bratislava in Slovakia), Frankfurt, Brussels, Paris and London to perform for princely houses and society figures. Stints back home were largely spent preparing for the next trip abroad. By the time the Mozarts embarked on the first of three trips to Italy in 1770, Wolfgang was gaining a reputation as a composer too, and was commissioned to write an opera by the ducal theatre in Milan at the age of 14 (*Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto*).

Initially, many people couldn't believe that Mozart was capable of all the feats attributed to him, and subjected him to various tests: both Daines Barrington (a fellow of the Royal Society in London) and Archbishop Sigismund von Schrattenbach in Salzburg shut him up in a room without his father to see whether he could transcribe pieces of music played to him without Leopold there to help. A Neapolitan audience forced him to play without a ring he customarily wore on his finger, which they believed to be a magic charm.

In August 1772, at the age of 16, Wolfgang was appointed Konzertmeister (leader of the court orchestra) by Hieronymous Graf von Colloredo, Schrattenbach's successor as archbishop of Salzburg. The young composer later became Colloredo's organ master, but the relationship between the archbishop and the Mozarts was never to be a satisfactory one. Wolfgang's father was eager to continue touring the courts of Europe, believing his son would win further commissions, and perhaps be appointed to a top musical post by some foreign prince, if only his talents could be showcased as widely as possible. Colloredo, understandably, had misgivings about allowing musicians who were supposedly in his employ to swan around Europe taking on commissions from other patrons. Wolfgang found life at Colloredo's court dull and uninspiring – the archbishop didn't harbour any great passion for music, such that Mozart compared playing for him and his cronies to performing for an audience of table and chairs, and took to calling the archbishop the "arch-oaf" (*Erzlümmel*) in his letters. Court musicians were also treated in much the same way as any other servants – Mozart sat next to the kitchen staff at mealtimes – and this rankled with a young composer who had already tasted a degree of celebrity.

In an attempt to find another job, Mozart spent much of 1777 and 1778 in Western Europe, but he re-entered the service of Colloredo on his return to Salzburg in 1779. Relations with the archbishop took a turn for the worse a year later, when Mozart sought six weeks' leave in order to supervise the production of *Idomeneo*, an opera he had been commissioned to write for the carnival season in Munich. He ended up staying in Munich for four months. In March 1781, Colloredo summoned Mozart to Vienna (where the prelate was visiting his sick father) in an effort to bring the errant composer back into line. By May, having spent several weeks of inactivity in the archbishop's household, Mozart was ready to cut himself loose: cosmopolitan Vienna not only seemed to offer wider opportunities for a freelance composer, it was also the home of Constanze Weber, with whom he was falling in love. When Mozart tried to give his notice to quit, he was literally kicked out of the building by the archbishop's steward. Mozart married Constanze in 1782 and visited Salzburg with her in 1783, but he was never to reside in the city of his birth again.

For more on Mozart's life in Vienna, see p.78.

Baroque remodelling of the city, the eighteenth-century expulsion of protestants, Salzburg's fate in the Napoleonic wars and the rise of tourism. There's also a display on the relationship between Wolf Dietrich and his mistress Salome Alt. Linked to the Neue Residenz via an archeological display of 2000 years of Salzburg's history is the **Panorama Museum** (Mon–Wed & Fri–Sun 9am–5pm, Thurs 9am–8pm; €2), which displays Michael Sattler's spectacular 26-metre panorama of Salzburg as it was in 1829.

The complex of buildings south and west of Mozartplatz exudes the ecclesiastical and temporal power once wielded by Salzburg's archbishops, whose erstwhile living quarters, the **Residenz**, dominate the western side of the **Residenzplatz**. Begun in the sixteenth century during the reign of Wolf Dietrich and completed by his successor Marcus Sitticus, the complex spreads two vast colonnaded wings around a central courtyard. Inside lies a sequence of bombastic **Prunkräume**, or state rooms (daily 10am–5pm; combined ticket with Residenzgalerie €8.20). Highlights are relatively easy to pick out: the Schöne Galerie has ceilings by Rottmayr and a copy of the mysterious but over-hyped Greco-Roman statue, the *Young Man of Magdalensberg* (see p.333), while the Audienzsaal is decked with valuable Flemish tapestries. At the age of 11, Mozart performed in the elegant, spacious Rittersaal or Knights' Hall, one of several rooms redesigned in the early eighteenth century to the designs of the great Austrian Baroque architects, Johann Fischer von Erlach and Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt. Five years earlier, at the tender age of 6, he gave his first concert before the court of Prince-Archbishop Sigismund Graf von Schrattenback in the more intimate surroundings of the sumptuous, red Konferenzsaal.

One floor above the Prunkräume, the **Residenzgalerie** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; open Mon during Salzburg Festival; €6) offers a fine display of archiepiscopal acquisitions, beginning with Caspar Memberger's mid-sixteenth-century cycle depicting the Flood. The collection's two most valued works, Rembrandt's small but compelling *Old Woman Praying*, thought to be a portrait of the artist's mother, and Rubens' *Allegory of Charles V as Master of the World* (1664), a blatant piece of Habsburg propaganda showing the (long-deceased) emperor receiving the gift of the globe from a cherub, share wall space with a host of lesser-known landscapes and still lifes.

The Domkirche

Arches link the Residenzplatz with **Domplatz** to the south, dominated by the pale marble facade of Salzburg's cathedral, the **Domkirche St Rupert**. Once the forum of Roman Juvavum, the site has held a succession of churches since Bishop Virgil first built a chapel here in the eighth century. Although initially conceived by Wolf Dietrich as a cathedral to outshine St Peter's in Rome, the current edifice, begun in 1614, reflects the more modest ambitions of his successor Marcus Sitticus and his favoured architect, Santino Solari. The crests of both Sitticus and Paris Lodron, who occupied the archiepiscopal throne on completion of the forty-year project, adorn the pediment of the cathedral's western facade; at ground level, modern bronze doors are flanked by monumental statues of SS Rupert, Virgil, Peter and Paul. The interior (open daily: Jan, Feb & Nov Mon–Sat 8am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm; March, April, Oct & Dec Mon–Sat 8am–6pm, Sun 1–6pm; May–July & Sept Mon–Sat 8am–7pm, Sun 1–7pm; Aug Mon–Sat 8am–8pm, Sun 1–8pm; donation requested) is impressively cavernous, although the overall effect is one of cool spaciousness, only partially alleviated by the dizzying ceiling frescoes. They're at their best in and around the central dome, rebuilt after destruction by Allied bombing on October 16 1944. Best of the Dom's

intricate stucco work is in the sequence of small chapels, on each side of the nave, whose low ceilings are crowded with personable cherubs. Left of the entrance is the Romanesque font in which Mozart was baptized, a bronze affair resting on four feet in the shape of lions' paws and decorated with reliefs of saints. Below the dome, steps descend to a stark crypt, which houses the graves of some illustrious prelates, Paris Lodron among them.

The **Dommuseum**, immediately to your right as you enter the cathedral porch (mid-May to late Oct Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 11am–6pm; €5), owes much to the acquisitive habits of mid-seventeenth-century Archbishop Guidobald von Thun, who amassed a collection on the model of the famous Wunderkammer established by Emperor Rudolf II in Prague. What's left of Guidobold's collection (much was moved to Vienna when Salzburg became part of Austria in 1816) is displayed in its original form, a series of cabinets arranged by category: rosaries, minerals, scientific instruments, ivory, things made from goat horn, crystals, seashells and globes. To the modern eye, it looks more like a sale of upmarket bric-a-brac than a serious museum, but contemporaries would have regarded the sheer variety of objects on display as a manifestation of God's creative genius. The museum's upper floor is more conventional, with an impressive array of altarpieces, notably a surreal *Temptation of St Anthony* by a follower of Hieronymus Bosch. Best of the few Baroque paintings is Rottmayr's fanciful portrayal of a cherubic St Vitus being boiled in a cauldron.

The damp and musty **Grabungen** beneath the cathedral (July & Aug daily 9am–5pm; other times on request; €2.50), accessible via steps outside the cathedral's north wall, expose the modest remains of its predecessors, featuring abstract patterns in vivid colours; there are also mosaics and the excavated remains of the heating system from a Roman villa. Behind the cathedral to the south, **Kapitelplatz** centres on one of Salzburg's finest fountains, the **Kapitelschwemme**, an eighteenth-century horse-trough magnificently presided over by a trident-wielding statue of Neptune. At the southern end of the square, a steep path and the Festungsbahn funicular railway both provide access to the Festung Hohensalzburg (see p.385).

The Franziskanerkirche

At the western end of Domplatz an archway leads through to Franziskanergasse and the **Franziskanerkirche** (entrance in Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse; daily 6.30am–7.30pm, no access during mass) a fifteenth-century reconstruction of an eleventh-century edifice, noted for the high-roofed, semicircular choir held up by stately, slender columns. Set into the curve of the choir wall are nine chapels, their interiors adorned with fussy, restless stucco work, statuettes and paintings – the result of an eighteenth-century Baroque face-lift courtesy of Fischer von Erlach. Erlach was also responsible for the high altar, although the Madonna that forms its centrepiece is a fine example of late-Gothic sculpture by Tyrolean master Michael Pacher (the Child is a later addition). It's easy to miss the church's oldest artwork, a twelfth-century marble lion guarding the stairway to the pulpit.

The building on the southern side of Franziskanergasse, opposite the church, boasts a fine Renaissance relief of Wolf Dietrich in the (for him, unlikely) garb of a monk.

The Peterskirche

Opposite the Franziskanerkirche, arches on the south side of Franziskanergasse lead through to the **Peterskirche**, Salzburg's most dazzling Rococo statement. Although occupying a largely Romanesque shell, the church was extensively

remodelled in the late eighteenth century, with Philip Hinterseer's elaborate wrought-iron gates separating the porch from a sumptuous visual feast of stucco mouldings in the nave. Among paintings crowding the walls are two dramatic renditions of the Crucifixion by Ignazio Solari and Kaspar Memberger. Behind the church, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century graves of Salzburg's middle class fill the arcades of the **Petersfriedhof**, lurking beneath the cliffs of the Hohensalzburg. Catacombs cut into the rock face by Christian inhabitants of third-century Juvavum can be visited (May–Sept Tues–Sun 10.30am–5pm; Oct–April Wed & Thurs 10.30am–3.30pm, Fri–Sun 10.30am–4pm; €1), worth considering more for the atmosphere than any historic sights.

The Rupertinum

Continuing west along Franziskanergasse, it's not long before you hit Max-Reinhard-Platz and the **Rupertinum** on the corner of Wiener-Philharmoniker-Gasse (Tues & Thurs–Sun 10am–6pm, Wed 10am–9pm; open Mon 10am–6pm during Salzburg Festival and the Mozartwoche; €6, or €12 combi ticket with Museum der Moderne), a gallery devoted to twentieth-century work and major touring exhibitions of contemporary art. Gustav Klimt's *Unterach am Attersee* is probably the most famous canvas here, a marvellous example of Post-Impressionist landscape painting from an artist more usually known for his florid Jugendstil excesses. The Rupertinum now forms part of the Museum der Moderne (see opposite).

Universitätsplatz and around

Immediately west of the Rupertinum, Fischer von Erlach's **Kollegienkirche** dominates the **Universitätsplatz**, an elongated square peppered with market stalls selling wonderful local produce. Squeezed between two chunky towers is the church's most idiosyncratic feature, a bowed facade which juts forth like a huge bay window. Anton Pfaffinger's high altar of 1740, with classical columns presenting a rather too literal allegory of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, seems lost within Erlach's hangar-sized interior. Behind the church, Hofstallgasse is dominated by the long facade of the **Festspielhaus**, built to provide the Salzburg Festival with a central concert venue and updated in rather anonymous fashion with the addition of the new small concert hall, the Haus für Mozart, in 2006. Guided tours (daily: July & Aug 9.30am, 2pm & 3.30pm; June & Sept 2pm & 3.30pm; Oct–May 2pm; €5) provide access to both concert halls and the Felsenreitschule in which outdoor performances are held – a curious quadrangle of rock-hewn niches, formerly the archiepiscopal riding school's stables. Beside the Festspielhaus, a staircase leads from Toscaninihof up onto the Mönchsberg hill. The less energetic can take the nearby Mönchsberg lift (Mönchsbergaufzug; daily: July & Aug 8am–1am; rest of year Mon, Tues & Thurs–Sun 8am–7pm, Wed until 10pm; €2.90 return).

Northeast of the Festspielhaus, but still in the shadow of the Mönchsberg, is the **Pferdschwemme**, a horse-trough built in 1700 for the archbishop's riding school and embellished with a range of equine motifs. Murals of different breeds form the backdrop to the fountain, which centres on a statue of a loincloth-clad youth grappling with an unruly horse – a possible reference to the story of Alexander the Great taming the wild horse Bucephalus. A short distance down Bürgerspitalgasse, the **Bürgerspital** is a sixteenth-century almshouse now containing the **Spielzeugsmuseum** (Toy Museum; daily 9am–5pm; €3), an unassuming and largely unlabelled collection of model railways, dolls, houses, puppets, paper theatres and other playthings, plus a collection of historic musical instruments.

Haus der Natur

Salzburg's natural history collection, in the **Naturkundemuseum** (daily 9am–5pm; €5) is a few steps north of the Bürgerspital on Museumsplatz. Five excellently arranged exhibition floors make this one of the city's more fun-filled attractions, a welcome breather from the culture-heavy sights elsewhere. Downstairs, the requisite dinosaur models are joined by an extensive aquarium inhabited by piranhas and Red Sea sharks, amongst others. Upstairs floors offer an endless parade of stuffed fauna, while the Reptilienzoo contains live snakes and alligators, and a section on space travel features a model of an American Mercury rocket.

Festung Hohensalzburg, the Mönchsberg and the Museum der Moderne

Surveying the city from its hilltop perch to the south, the **Festung Hohensalzburg** originated in the eleventh century, when Archbishop Gebhard, an ally of the pope in the latter's quarrel with the Holy Roman Empire, needed a strong-point from which to repel the attacks of the south German princes. Most of the present-day fortress is the result of rebuilding by Archbishop Leonhard von Keutschach in the early 1500s, who added some sumptuous state apartments.

The quicker of two routes up to the fortress is via the **Festungsbahn funicular**, from the southern end of Kapitelplatz (daily: May–Aug 9am–10pm; Sept 9am–9pm; Oct–April 9am–5pm; €3.40 return, or €10 including entrance to the fortress), but the 15-minute journey on foot isn't as hard as it looks and offers excellent views of the city along the way. A wander around the main courtyard of the **fortress** (daily: July & Aug 9am–7pm; May, June & Sept 9am–6pm; Oct–April 9am–5pm; €10), together with a few of the surrounding bastions and passageways, is enough to gain a feel for the place, though von Keutschach's **state rooms** can be visited as part of a ninety-minute **audioguide tour**. Starting with panoramic views from the castle watchtower, the tour takes in the **Fürstenzimmer**, whose ceiling and doorframes are masterpieces of late-Gothic woodcarving, and a glimpse of Der Stier ("The Bull"), a monstrous sixteenth-century organ whose sonorous tones can be heard all over the city centre on the rare occasions when it's played. The tour concludes with a chance to explore three small museums which can't be visited on their own: the **Burgmuseum**, which includes Archbishop Wolf Dietrich's suit of armour, a small collection of Gothic statuary, and instruments of torture, among them grotesque *Schandmasken* ("masks of shame"), which petty criminals were forced to wear by way of punishment, the **Rainer-Regiments-Museum,** devoted to the infantry regiment stationed in the castle until 1945, and the **Marionettenmuseum**.

Paths lead east from the fortress to the **Stift Nonnberg (**daily: summer 7am–7pm; winter 7am–dusk, no admittance during mass), whose church is a largely fifteenth-century rebuilding of a Romanesque structure. The convent was founded by St Rupert's niece St Erentrude, who is shown beside John the Baptist and the Virgin on the tympanum above the main doorway, and whose tomb originally lay in the church crypt, though she has long since been moved to the less gloomy surroundings of the apse. There's a fine collection of marble memorials to other, later abbesses along the north wall of the nave, and, on the right side of the chancel, a fine late-Gothic winged altar showing the Nativity.

West of the Hohensalzburg, trails lead onto the neighbouring **Mönchsberg** hill, a partly wooded area popular for weekend walks and also accessible from the staircase and lift beside the Festspielhaus (see opposite). The Mönchsberg offers superb views of Salzburg's Baroque monuments, especially from the terrace

beside the *Naturfreundehaus* hostel on its northwestern tip. Beside the hostel runs a grizzled line of fortifications dating from Paris Lodron's seventeenth-century bastion-building craze, and a maze of leafy pathways leading down towards the suburb of Mülln. The hill's biggest attraction is the uncompromisingly minimalist **Museum der Moderne** (Tues & Thurs–Sun 10am–6pm, Wed 10am–9pm; €8 or €12 combi ticket with Rupertinum; Ⓦ www.museumdermoderne.at). Sitting atop the Mönchsberg lift, close to a nineteenth-century water tower, and almost as visible a landmark as the fortress, the museum provides a home for major exhibitions of international and Austrian contemporary art.

The right bank

Streets on the **right bank** of the Salzach zero in on **Platzl**, a small square at the eastern end of the Staatsbrücke. Entering Platzl from the east is Steingasse, originally the route by which the salt traders arrived in the city. Still preserving much of its character, it's a narrow, cobbled alley lined with buildings of medieval origin, many now housing bars, restaurants and, in one case, a discreet high-class brothel.

Ascending eastward from Platzl is **Linzergasse**, a busy pedestrianized shopping street hung with wrought-iron shop signs like those of the Getreidegasse. Linzergasse skirts the lower slopes of the **Kapuzinerberg**, which is named after the Capuchin monastery that crowns its summit. Fortified by Archbishop Paris Lodron during the Thirty Years War, the hill still sports a brace of attractively pinnacled defensive towers, together with a stretch of wall, on its southern flanks. During World War II German planners earmarked the Kapuzinerberg as the site of the so-called Gauforum, a grandiose civic project featuring party headquarters, a palace for the Gauleiter (regional governor), sports stadium and a brand new Festspielhaus. Envisioned as a Nazi acropolis that would recast Salzburg as the teutonic Athens, the Gauforum never got past the planning stage. Easily climbed in five minutes from Linzergasse, today's Kapuzinerberg is primarily known for its excellent view of Salzburg's domes and spires. More poignantly, the hill was home to the Jewish writer Stefan Zweig from 1919 until he fled Europe in 1934 to escape the growing fascist menace. He settled in Brazil, where he and his wife committed suicide in 1942. There's a memorial next to the Kapuzinerkloster. An alternative approach to the hill is up the intriguing, steep Imbergstiege from Steingasse; you can pause halfway at the tiny St Johanniskirche, which dates from 1319 but was rebuilt in Baroque style in 1681.

Continuing along Linzergasse, the dour **Sebastianskirche** is less interesting than the **St Sebastian cemetery** (daily: April–Oct 9am–7pm; Nov–March 9am–4pm; free) behind it, a colonnaded oasis of inner-city peace dominated by the **mausoleum of Archbishop Wolf Dietrich**. The tiled interior, with paintings by Elias Castello (whose own grave, in the arcade to the west, is one of the finest Renaissance monuments in the cemetery), adds delicacy to what is otherwise a pompous and self-regarding monument. The path leading from the cemetery entrance to the mausoleum passes the graves of Mozart's father Leopold and widow Constanze, the latter buried beside her second husband, Georg Nikolaus von Nissen, one of Mozart's first biographers. Elsewhere, innumerable family tombs attest to an Austrian love of the macabre. In the south-western corner of the cemetery is the **tomb of Paracelsus** (see box opposite).

Leaving the cemetery by the west entrance (just by the Paracelsus memorial) and turning right into a narrow alley soon brings you to the much rebuilt, somewhat unprepossessing **Loretokloster** on Paris-Lodron-Strasse, infamous for the seventeenth-century gaol which occupied one corner of the monastery

Paracelsus

The grandly named Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, the self-styled "Paracelsus", was born in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, in 1493. He was a pupil of renowned alchemist Abbot Tritheim of Würzburg, and attended various European universities (later claiming, fraudulently, to have a degree in medicine from the University of Ferrara), but much of his medical knowledge was obtained during his extensive wanderings as an itinerant healer. Crisscrossing Europe from 1517–26, he came to believe that the medical establishment was far too rooted in the ossified theories of ancient Greek and Roman writers, and argued that open-minded enquiry based on close observation of the effects of medicines was more important in the development of medical knowledge. However, he was also an arrogant and vain self-publicist, calling himself **Paracelsus** ("the equal of Celsus", a reference to the first-century compiler of medical encyclopaedias), and treating his medical contemporaries with a contempt that ensured he remained, for much of his life, a distrusted outsider.

He would probably have remained an unorthodox travelling healer but for his adoption by the intellectual elite of Basel in 1526. Here, he was engaged as the personal physician of Johannes Froben, a humanist and publisher of Europe-wide renown who recommended Paracelsus to friends, notable among them the celebrated scholar Erasmus. The city fathers made Paracelsus their municipal doctor, and he was offered a chair in medicine by the university. He began his university career by publicly burning the works of Galen, the third-century Greek physician who had hitherto remained the prime authority on all things medical. Such iconoclasm ruffled the feathers of the local medical elite, and Paracelsus was drummed out of office after two years.

Paracelsus lived in Villach as a young man (his father practised medicine here from 1502 to 1532), studied the respiratory ailments of Tyrolean silver-miners, and visited Badgastein, where he was impressed by the curative properties of the local spa waters. Not much is known of his two periods in Salzburg, the first in the 1520s when he briefly had a medical practice in Pfeifergasse, the second in 1541 when he died here, ostensibly as a result of a wound received in a brawl with one of his medical adversaries. He left a huge volume of published writings which, in typical sixteenth-century humanist fashion, tried to combine the discipline of scientific enquiry with a much more esoteric appreciation of the power of mysticism and magic. Many of his ideas were ahead of their time: he emphasized critical observation of the patient, and offered important insights into the psychological side of the healing process, believing that the patient's faith in the power of a medicine was often more important than the properties of the medicine itself. He challenged the contemporary notion that the human body was governed by the four humours (and the four elements that made them up – choler, blood, phlegm and bile), and placed the role of pharmaceuticals in the treatment of illness on a sound scientific basis. Most peculiarly, he held that ailments should be treated with plants that resembled the afflicted parts of the body (and there are no prizes for guessing which organ he thought would benefit from contact with a cucumber). He was also responsible for introducing the word "gnome" to the lexicon, a creature that he believed dwelt beneath the earth's crust.

until it was destroyed by allied bombing in World War II. The **Hexenturm** or "witches' tower" was built to accommodate those accused of sorcery during one of the most notorious witch-crazes in Europe. Dubbed the **Zauberjackel Affair** after the nickname of one of its first defendants, the craze reached its height in 1678, when a total of 109 people were put on trial for a variety of devil-related offences. Two thirds of the suspects were under 21 years of age, and most were itinerant beggars or landless peasants looking for work – it's reasonable to assume that the witch-hunt symbolized the discomfort felt by Salzburg

cityfolk towards a potentially violent rural underclass. Those found guilty were rewarded with death by strangulation if they agreed to confess their sins, and public burning if they refused.

Makartplatz and Mozart Wohnhaus

Two blocks northwest of Platzl, **Makartplatz** is presided over by Fischer von Erlach's **Dreifaltigkeitskirche**, or church of the Holy Trinity, notable for the graceful curve of its exterior and the oval plan of its dome, which boasts a crowd of vibrant paintings by Rottmayr. Much smaller than the same architect's Kollegienkirche, the church is a remarkably successful exercise in squeezing a structure of extreme delicacy and elegance into a restricted space. The house at no. 8 is the **Mozart-Wohnhaus** (daily: July & Aug 9am–7pm; Sept–June 9am–6pm; €6), where the Mozart family lived between 1773 and 1787. Though little of the original building survives, courtesy of allied bombing raids in World War II, the museum is a rather better introduction to the composer's life than the Geburtshaus. Headsets deliver engrossing commentary together with well-chosen excerpts of music, a short video follows Mozart's journeys around Europe, and a small movie theatre screens documentaries on Mozart's career, to booming musical accompaniment. The well-labelled collection of period furniture, original manuscripts and eighteenth-century harpsichords won't disappoint the purists.

Schloss Mirabell and the Mirabellgarten

From Makartplatz, Dreifaltigkeitsgasse leads northwest towards the broad flagstoned expanse of Mirabellplatz, where virtually every tour bus in the city seems to pick up and drop off its cargo of sightseers. Running along the western side of the square is the grey facade of **Schloss Mirabell**, built by Archbishop Wolf Dietrich as a palatial home for Salome Alt, the mistress with whom the energetic prelate sired at least a dozen children. This relationship with the daughter of a respected local burgher actually endeared Wolf Dietrich to the Salzburgers, not least because it appeared to be a genuine love match. There's nothing to suggest that the archbishop was anything other than a loyal and devoted partner, and he did his utmost to secure a stable and dignified future for Salome and the kids – the Austrian emperor Rudolf II graciously offered to provide them all with noble titles. Revamped by Lukas von Hildebrandt in the early eighteenth century, and further reconstructed after a fire in the nineteenth, the Schloss very much looks like the civic administration building it has now become – a rather unassuming office block centred on a plain courtyard. One outstanding feature however is the marble **staircase** by Baroque master George Raphael Donner, located beside the west entrance (if you're approaching from Mirabellplatz, proceed straight through the courtyard to the arch on the far side, and go through the first door on your right). It's a deliciously extravagant and sensual piece of work: plump cherubs lounge around on the balustrade, watched over by Greco-Roman gods and goddesses who occupy wall niches in the stairwell. The staircase leads to the **Marmorsaal** or Marble Hall, a grandiose former banqueting hall that is now a popular concert venue and wedding salon.

The archway immediately west of the staircase leads to the **Mirabellgarten** behind the building, laid out during the rule of Archbishop Johann Ernst von Thun according to plans provided by his favourite architect, Fischer von Erlach, and redesigned by Franz Anton Danreiter in 1730. The first thing that catches your eye is a greening copper statue of Pegasus, caught in mid-prance by sculptor Caspar Gras in 1661, and moved here in 1913 to provide a focus

▲ Mirabellgarten

for this part of the garden. Just to the north, a staircase guarded by a brace of curiously goat-faced unicorns leads up to the rose-filled high ground of the adjoining **Kurgarten**, which offers a much-photographed view back across the city towards the Hohensalzburg. A small pavilion here serves as a space for art exhibitions. Immediately west of the Pegasus statue, steps followed by a small wooden bridge lead to the **Zwerglgarten** ("Dwarf Garden"), occupying the crown of an old defensive bastion, the only surviving portion of the massive system of fortifications built by Santino Solari between 1620 and 1646. It was laid out as a park and peopled with a series of grotesque statues of dwarfs a century later – proof that the Teutonic fascination for garden gnomes goes back a long way. The main body of the Mirabellgarten stretches south from the

Pegasus statue, while a central pond is surrounded by four Baroque sculptures by Ottavio Muto, each of which purports to be an allegory of one of the four elements – earth, air, fire and water – although it's not easy to deduce this from the gratuitously writhing, semi-naked figures on display. Nestling on the eastern side of the gardens is the **Barockmuseum** (Easter, July–Aug & Christmas Tues–Sun 10am–5pm, rest of year Wed–Sun 10am–5pm, closed one week Nov & Feb; €4.50; Ⓦwww.barockmuseum.at), which focuses on Austrian art of that period, although it is primarily devoted to the preliminary sketches made by artists prior to the execution of a major work rather than the finished paintings themselves.

The outskirts

A clutch of worthwhile sights on the southern and western fringes of the city are easily reached on the municipal bus network. Most important of these are the palace, gardens and zoo at **Schloss Hellbrunn**, 5km south of the Altstadt and accessible via the #25 bus from the train station, Mirabellplatz or Rudolfskai. The Italianate palace was built by Santino Solari between 1613 and 1619 to serve as the suburban pleasure villa and hunting lodge of the urbane Archbishop Marcus Sitticus, who commissioned the job immediately on his accession to the archiepiscopal throne. Bus #25 continues to St Leonhard just beyond the city's southern suburbs, starting point for the cable-car ascent of the **Untersberg**, an impressively craggy height renowned for its expansive views.

On the road to the Bavarian town of Bad Reichenhall, Salzburger Land's excellent **Open-Air Museum** lies 12km to the southwest of Salzburg. You can escape to the museum by bus or cycle – there's a separate cycle path by the side of the road once you leave suburban Salzburg.

Lastly, on the eastern perimeter of Salzburg's Airport at Wilhelm-Spazier Str 7, **Hangar 7** is an ultra-modern glass exhibition space which houses the Flying Bulls historic aircraft collection, hosts exhibitions of contemporary art and is home to one of Salzburg's finest restaurants and its most dramatic bar. Bus #2 takes you there from the railway station.

Schloss Hellbrunn

For the worldly, Italian-educated Marcus Sitticus, Hellbrunn was a summer retreat where he could relax, enjoy the good life and entertain his guests. Foremost among the entertainments devised by the pleasure-loving prelate, the **Wasserspiele** (guided tours in English and German: late March, April & Oct 9am–4.30pm; May, June & Sept 9am–5.30pm; July & Aug 9am–10pm; €8.50) is a themed pocket of the Schloss gardens featuring shell-encrusted grottoes, water-powered clockwork figures, a wonderful mechanical theatre and trick fountains that spurt unexpectedly into life – all entirely puerile but utterly delightful, especially on a hot day, and unsurprisingly popular with children. During the tour you'll pass the Stone Theatre, an outdoor stage built in order to satisfy Marcus Sitticus's love of opera and drama. Austrian Emperor Ferdinand II was treated to an operatic performance here during an official visit to Salzburg in 1619, five years after Marcus had staged the first ever opera in the city – Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, in the Residenz.

The **Schloss** itself (same times and ticket; 35min audioguide tour) is filled with reminders of Marcus Sitticus's passion for animals, both those he hunted and those he collected to stock his park: names of some rooms, like the **Fish room**, hint at

the decor within. Disturbing to modern eyes, but relatively commonplace to the educated elite of Sitticus's time, are the paintings of the freaks of nature that once filled the archbishop's bizarre private zoo, notably various albino farm animals and an eight-legged horse. More refined tastes are revealed in the **Chinese room**, with hand-painted wallpaper depicting birds and cherry blossom, and in the **Octagon room**, where the archbishop's favoured musicians were invited to perform. The latter features wall paintings by Arsenio Mascagni in which the archbishop is portrayed in civilian clothes – a deliberate hint that he wished to be treated as a secular prince rather than church leader when in the comfort of his own summer palace – together with his mistress, Katharine von Mabon (despite issuing decrees against rowdy festivities and the keeping of brothels, Marcus Sitticus wore his vow of celibacy rather lightly, conducting a well-known affair with officer's wife Frau von Mabon, as well as with her sister).

Behind the Schloss stretches an extensive **park** (daily 6.30am–dusk), with tree-lined avenues, ornamental flowerbeds and well-stocked fish ponds.

The Volksmuseum and Hellbrunn zoo

Tickets to the Wasserspiele also include entrance to the **Volksmuseum** in the **Monatsschlösschen**, or "month-castle" – so called because it was constructed in a single month. Set on a wooded hill at the far end of the park, it holds a respectable collection of folk costumes and painted wooden furniture, but it's the section on the Salzburger Land's rural festivals that commands most attention. Pride of place goes to the towering effigy of Samson the giant, one of many that used to be hauled through towns during the **Samsonumzug** processions that marked Corpus Christi. Equally striking are the costumes donned during the **Perchtenlauf** processions, which take place on January 5 in the Pongau (see p.404), incorporating enormous head-dresses onto which mirrors, stuffed birds and other objects are mounted.

Adjoining the park, and stretching along the northern flanks of the hill, are the animal pens of **Zoo Salzburg** (daily: Jan–March & Nov–Dec 9am–4pm; April–June & Sept–Oct 9am–5pm; July–Aug 9am–6.30pm; Fri & Sat in Aug until 11pm, last admission 9.30pm; €8), a sizeable collection of worldwide fauna that counts pumas, lions, jaguars, snow leopards and rhinos among its numerous inmates.

The Untersberg

From Hellbrunn, #25 buses continue to the village of **ST LEONHARD**, 7km further south, where a cable car ascends the 1853-metre **Untersberg**. Local legend maintains that the emperor Charlemagne is asleep under the mountain and will awaken when the ravens disappear from the skies around the summit. The cable car (Jan–Feb & Dec 9am–4pm; March, early April–June & Oct 8.30am–5pm; July–Sept 8.30am–5.30pm; closed late March-early April & Nov–early Dec; return €18) provides access to an impressive panorama of the surrounding countryside, with Salzburg laid out to the north and the high Alps to the south. In winter, it's the haunt of skiers.

Salzburger Freilichtsmuseum (Open-Air Museum)

The **Salzburger Freilichtsmuseum**, the Salzburger Land's Open-Air Museum (March–June & Oct-early Nov Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; July–Sept daily 9am–6pm; Christmas & New Year daily 10am–4pm; €7), assembles over fifty historic farm buildings from all over the region in a large, partially wooded park. Buildings are

grouped by area of origin within the Salzburger Land. The most visible distinction lies between the single-building farmsteads typical of the Flachgau and the Tennengau in the north and east, and the twin-building farmsteads (where animals and hay were kept in a separate building lying parallel to the farmer's house) that once predominated in the Pongau to the southwest. Pongau and Pinzgau farmhouses also tend to have a bell on the roof (with which wives called in their husbands from far-flung fields), usually mounted in a small, intricately carved belfry, and sometimes crowned by a cast-iron weathercock. Demonstrations of rural crafts take place on summer Sundays.

The Open-Air Museum is 5km short of the village of **Grossgmain**, which stands on the Austrian–German border. Frequent #180 buses on the Salzburg–Grossgmain–Bad Reichenhall route drop off at the museum. It's also just about practical to cycle the 12km to the museum from Salzburg (head out towards the airport on the Innsbrucker Bundesstrasse and keep going until you see signs for Grossgmain and Bad Reichenhall). There's little in Grossgmain itself, so it's best to avail yourself of the refreshment facilities inside the museum before heading back to the city.

Hangar 7

Standing sleek, ultra-modern & sinuous on the opposite side of Salzburg Airport's runway to the terminal building, **Hangar 7** (daily 9am–10pm, free) is a monument to the obsessions (and deep pockets) of one man, Red Bull billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz. The striking glass structure opened in 2003 to house his Flying Bulls collection of historic aircraft, which includes a Boeing Stearman 75E stunt plane, a World War II B25 bomber and the Douglas DC-6B airliner that once belonged to the Yugoslavian head of state Marshal Tito. More compelling for many will be the wings with which granite-jawed extreme sportsman Felix Baumgartner made his unpowered flight across the English Channel on July 31, 2003. Red Bull racing motorcycles continue the high-octane theme, while dotted among the boys' toys are changing exhibits of contemporary art. Hangar 7 houses *Ikarus*, one of Salzburg's priciest gourmet restaurants, and is crowned by the stunning *Threesixty* bar, whose glass floor gives breathtaking (and vertigo-inducing) views down onto the aircraft collection.

Eating and drinking

There's no shortage of good **restaurants** in Salzburg, many of them dishing out traditional Austrian meat-based fare in atmospheric medieval town houses. Most offer good-value two-course **Mittagsmenüs** to attract midday tourist custom, though **ethnic restaurants** are sometimes better for an inexpensive lunch. Prices are generally not unduly exploitative: an evening meal in Salzburg need not be more expensive than in Austria's other major cities. Restaurants and cafés tend to close at around 11pm–midnight, while bars often continue serving food until 2am or beyond, although there's no hard and fast rule.

For takeaway **snacks**, there's a Würstelstand on Platzl on the right bank of the river. *Nordsee*, with branches at Getreidegasse 11 and 27, is a reliable source of takeaway tuna sandwiches and other seafood. Billa, Griesgasse 21, is the handiest central supermarket.

Daytime drinkers and pastry nibblers are well catered for by Salzburg's elegant **cafés**, which usually offer a sumptuous range of teas, coffees and alcoholic drinks, as well as snacks and full meals. They're often the best places to sample

two specialities for which Salzburg is famed – **Salzburger Nockerl**, a mound of sugary egg-whites and raspberries which has to be tried at least once, and the ubiquitous **Mozartkugeln**, the balls of chocolate-covered marzipan piled high in every souvenir store in the Altstadt. Most of the Mozartkügeln sold in boxes and presentation packs are the gold-wrapped, mass-produced ones; connoisseurs prefer the silver-wrapped, handmade variety which are much richer in marzipan, and can be bought loose from local confectioners.

Night-time drinking venues are scattered throughout the town, although there are two well-frequented drinking strips: Rudolfskai on the left bank is the main weekend drag for teen and twentysomething drinkers, with bars pumping out loud techno to a beer and tequila-sloshing crowd. The area around Giselakai, Imbergstrasse and Steingasse, on the opposite side of the Salzach, has a clutch of designer bars attracting a slightly older clientele.

Though its **lesbian** and **gay** scene is hardly on a par with Vienna, Salzburg is surprisingly lively, with a couple of bars on the right bank attracting a mainly local crowd, and if you're in Salzburg at the right time, it's well worth attending one of the big HOSI-fest club nights at ARGE Nonntal, usually held in December, January and July, and attracting lesbians and gay men from far and wide.

Cafés

Bazar Schwarzstr 3. Classic daytime coffeehouse with an elegant Art Deco interior and a nice terrace overlooking the Salzach. Breakfast pastries, cakes and full meals, all served by notoriously superior waiters.

Demel Mozartplatz 2. Strategically sited and swish, this new outpost of the famous Vienna kaffee-Konditorei. It nevertheless lacks the atmosphere of its more established local rivals.

Fischkrieg Ferdinand-Hanusch-Platz. Combined café and fishmongers in a bright riverside pavilion, offering anything from dainty smoked-salmon canapés to full grilled-fish meals, all at reasonable prices. Mon–Fri 8.30am–6.30pm, Sat 8.30am–1pm.

Kaffeháferl Universitätsplatz 6. One of the nicer small daytime cafés, with tables set out in a courtyard, and a short menu of reasonably priced lunchtime snacks, including lasagne and chilli con carne. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm, Sun noon–7pm.

Tomasselli Alter Markt 9. Most renowned of the city's daytime cafés, serving a bewildering array of cakes and pastries. Can be deluged by tourists, but the elegant Belle Epoque interior is dripping with atmosphere.

Restaurants

An Bing Goldgasse 13. Chinese cuisine on the first floor of a city-centre building (so no outdoor seating); one of the cheapest Mittagsmenüs around, from about €7.

Gäblerbrau Linzergasse 9 ⓣ0662/88965. Bustling hotel-restaurant with a range of familiar Austrian standards around the €11–16 range, a few cheaper mains and a couple of vegetarian pasta or noodle options.

Il Centro II Linzergasse 23. Cheap, cheerful pizzeria, lacking in atmosphere but with a big list of inexpensive thin-crust pies and pasta specials (from around €5.50) chalked up outside.

Mönchsberg 32 Mönchsberg 32 ⓣ0662/841000. Elegant and not wildly expensive, the restaurant of the Museum der Moderne has superb uninterrupted views of the Altstadt and fortress – especially from the outdoor terrace – and serves Italian and Austrian cuisine, with mains around €17–20, plus cheaper pasta dishes. Open Tues–Sat 9am–1am, Sun 9am–6pm.

Resch & Lieblich Toscaninihof 1 ⓣ0662/843675. Good-value Austrian cuisine in a popular restaurant and wine bar next door to the Festspielhaus, its dining rooms carved out of the cliffs of the Mönchsberg. Despite plenty of outdoor seating, it still gets crowded, especially during the Festival.

Shakespeare Hubert-Sattler-Gasse 3 ⓣ0662/879106. Laid-back, smoky, bohemian café/bar and restaurant off Mirabellplatz, serving Italian, vegetarian and Chinese food. There are frequent live performances in the theatre space out back.

Stadtalm Am Mönchsberg. Restaurant of the *Naturfreundehaus* hostel, offering cheap, no-nonsense Austrian home cooking. Marvellous view of town from the wooden benches on its outdoor terrace.

Stadtkrug Linzergasse 20 ⓣ0662/873545. A popular barrel-vaulted space offering mid-priced favourites like *Wiener Schnitzel* and *Tafelspitz* for around €13.50, plus at least one vegetarian option.

Sternbräu Getreidegasse 34/Griesgasse 23 ⓣ0662/842140. Vast, rambling establishment built around a courtyard in the Altstadt, featuring traditional Austrian restaurant, Italian trattoria, a late

bar, lots of outdoor seating, and a few vegetarian options.

St Paul's Stub'n Herrengasse 16. Studentish, unpretentious *kneipe* on the first floor of an old house below the castle, offering cheap beer and Austro-Italian cooking, with *Kasnocken* for €7 and main courses from €10.

Stiftskeller St Peter St-Peter-Bezirk 4 ⓣ0662/841268-0. Medium-priced, traditional Austrian dishes in rather lovely surroundings, next to the Peterskirche; the arches of the Hof are built into the rockface. Abundant outdoor seating fills up quickly; Mozart dinner concerts take place in the glorious Baroque hall.

Weisses Kreuz Bierjodlgasse 6 ⓣ0662/845641. On a cobbled street below the fortress, this place specializes in Balkan food. Dishes range from cheap spicy *cevapcici* (grilled mincemeat rissoles) to more expensive meat-heavy meals, and mains around €8. Closed Tues.

Zipfer Bierhaus Universitätsplatz 19. Homely wood-furnished beer hall with Austrian staples and cheap lunchtime specials. A convenient bolthole from city-centre sightseeing.

Zum Fidelen Affen Priesterhausgasse 8 ⓣ0662/877361. Wood-panelled, pub-like place on the right bank, which does a good line in traditional Austrian cooking. It's not as cheap as it once was, with mains from €9–17, but the informal atmosphere and good beer make it enduringly popular – so book. There's seating outside in summer.

Zur Glocke Schanzlgasse 2 ⓣ0662/845391-0. Homely Gasthof on the Altstadt's eastern fringe, with inexpensive traditional food, plain decor, and an enthusiastic army of regular clients. Main courses in the €11–12 range include salmon fillet in white-wine sauce. Closed Sat eve & Sun.

Bars

ARGE Kultur Salzburg Josef Preiss Allee 16. Impressive modern cultural centre 15min walk from the centre, offering a largely alternative diet of music and theatre, and a relaxed, popular café-bar – *Arge Beisl* – with healthy eats on the menu. Open Mon–Fri 11am–1am.

Augustiner Bräu Augustinergasse 4–6. Vast, open-air beer garden – Austria' s largest – shaded by chestnut trees and filled with students, local families and tourists. Beer is brewed on the premises and served in ceramic steins. There's a big variety of eating options too.

Bazillus Imbergstr 2a. Stylish modern bar on the right bank. The large outdoor terrace is a great riverside drinking spot, with excellent views towards the Altstadt and fortress.

Bar-Café Diva Priesterhausgasse 22. Laid back, pleasant lesbian and gay café-bar in the Linzergasse area, attracting a young crowd. Open daily from 6pm.

Fridrich Steingasse 15. Relaxed, tiny right bank wine bar with high stools, brick-vaulted ceilings and a 30–40 something clientele enjoying the Austrian wines and brandies.

Pepe Steingasse 3. Smoky right-bank cocktail bar serving inexpensive drinks to a young, stylish crowd. Throbbing with life most nights, it's a real squeeze to find a place at the long bar.

Republic Anton-Neumayr-Platz 2. Cool and trendy café-bar during the day, mecca for left-field DJ culture at night, with club nights at weekends until 4am. Also a good place for food: breakfasts are served up until 6pm, international cuisine thereafter until 11pm.

Rockhouse Bar Schallmooser Hauptstr 46. Narrow, tunnel-like and rather stylish bar hewn out of the Kapuzinerberg hill. In-house Djs spin rock and dance tracks to an open-minded crowd. The bar is attached to the Rockhouse music venue some 2km northeast of the centre – check local listings information to see what's on.

Schnaitl Pub Bergstr 5. Relaxed and tolerant studenty, grungy bar on the right bank with an alternative rock soundtrack.

Shamrock Rudolfskai 12. Popular Irish pub with huge selection of whiskies, English premier league football on TV and regular live music. The main bar area usually becomes a sea of people by 11pm on Fri.

Stieglkeller Festungsgasse 10. Vast beer garden on the way up to the fortress, with outdoor terraces offering excellent views of the city.

Vis-à-vis Rudolfskai 24. Smartish DJ/cocktail bar with a long bar, dance music soundtrack and an atmospheric, grotto-like interior. It attracts a slightly more civilized clientele than some of the rowdier Rudolfskai venues. Open until 4am.

Die Weisse 10 Rupertgasse. Beer hall a short walk northeast of the Linzergasse serving locally brewed Weissbier in convivial surroundings. A popular place to eat, with a large beer garden out back. Closed Sun.

Zwettler's Stiftskeller Kaigasse 3. One of the more relaxed, convivial and conveniently placed drinking venues in the Altstadt, featuring worn tables and wood-panelled snugs under low arched ceilings.

Zweistein Giselakai 9. Salzburg's liveliest and most central gay and lesbian bar, right next to the Staatsbrücke across the river from the Altstadt. Open daily 6pm–4am, weekends 5am; there's a cover charge if there's cabaret on.

Entertainment

As befits the city of Mozart, **music** is Salzburg's speciality. Most is classical, but there is a scattering of rock venues and clubs. **Theatre** is also serious business here, if your German is up to it. The best sources of **listings** are *Salzburger Monat*, a free monthly available from the tourist office which, although printed in German, is pretty easy to decipher; the tourist office's own multilingual *Events* brochure, published every two months; or the *Salzburger Nachrichten* daily newspaper. The Salzburg Ticket Service, inside the tourist office (Ⓣ0662/840310, Ⓦwww.salzburgticket.com), has tickets for most of the performances going on in the city, including the Festspiele (see below).

Classical music

A rich diet of **classical music** is available in Salzburg all year round. The Salzburg Festival is one of the most prestigious music festivals in the world, and Salzburg's music academy, the Mozarteum, organizes Mozart-related and other concerts throughout the year. In addition, there are regular chamber music performances in Schloss Mirabell's Marmorsaal. The tourist office has details.

The Salzburger Festspiele and the Mozartwoche

The outstanding event in Salzburg's musical calendar is the **Salzburger Festspiele**, or Salzburg Festival, a five- to six-week celebration of opera, orchestral music and theatre that runs from the last week of July to the end of August. First staged in 1920, the Festival grew out of discussions between the cinema, theatre and opera director Max Reinhardt, composer Richard Strauss, conductor Franz Schalk and playwright Hugo von Hoffmannsthal. Their aim was to gather the world's best musicians and performers for a celebration of all that was best in high culture, embracing the traditional (set-piece performances of Mozart's works have always been a major feature) and the adventurously modern. This original conception of the Festival is still very much in place, and the main opera and theatre performances are often entrusted to ground-breaking directors.

Over the years the festival has provided Salzburg with a sense of cultural mission, and its content is always a prime source of local debate. After Hitler's rise to power in Germany the festival was widely considered a beacon of liberal, cosmopolitan culture in a Europe increasingly dominated by fascism, and the conductor Arturo Toscanini, a well-known anti-fascist, became the Festival's symbol. After the Anschluss Hitler earmarked Salzburg as an

Silent Night

No account of Salzburg's musical heritage would be complete without some reference to **Josef Mohr**, assistant pastor in the nearby village of Oberndorf and author of the words to the hymn **Stille Nacht**, or *Silent Night*. The most-recorded song in musical history was penned on Christmas Eve 1818, when the Oberndorf church organ broke down just before the midnight service. Mohr decided to improvise a simple song that could be performed with a guitar, enlisting the help of the organist Franz-Xaver Gruber who came up with the chords, and *Stille Nacht* was the result. The parish church that stood in Mohr's time has long since succumbed to flood damage and dilapidation, but the pretty little Silent Night Memorial Chapel (Stille-Nacht-Gedächtnisskapelle, Stille Nacht Platz, Ⓣ06272/4422, daily 8am–6pm; free) is the focus of a memorial service every Dec 24 at 5pm.

important centre of spiritual and artistic life, and the festival became a propagandist celebration of folksy teutonic nationalism. The character of the postwar festival owes much to Herbert von Karajan, who was its director from 1956 until his death in 1989. Under Karajan's stewardship it attracted top performers and became a byword for high artistic standards, but lost some of its pioneering spirit. It also increasingly became a society event from which ordinary concertgoers felt excluded. In recent years the programme has become more varied and attempts have been made to introduce a wider spread of admission prices, although tickets – especially those for the cheaper seats – sell out almost as soon as the programme is published. Major productions take place in the **Festspielhaus**, but other venues around town are pressed into service too. If you're interested in obtaining tickets you should pre-reserve by early January, in writing to Kartenbüro der Salzburger Festspiele, Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz 11, Postfach 140, A-5010 Salzburg (Ⓣ0662/8045-500, Ⓦwww.salzburgfestival.at) or via the festival website. Direct sales begin in March, but if you leave it this late you're likely to be disappointed. Reservations are confirmed by the end of March.

Salzburg's other major festival, the **Mozartwoche**, spotlights Mozart-penned opera, symphonic and chamber music and takes place every year around Mozart's birthday on January 27 at the Mozarteum. For details, contact the Mozarteum's ticket office in the Mozart Wohnhaus at Theatergasse 2, Salzburg (Ⓣ0662/873154, Ⓦwww.mozarteum.at).

Year-round events: church music and tourist-oriented shows

Sunday morning mass in Salzburg's bigger churches often features Mozart's sacral compositions: services at the **Domkirche** (at 10am, featuring full choir and cathedral organ) and the **Franziskanerkirche** (at 9am, sometimes featuring full orchestra; Ⓦwww.franziskaner.at) are well worth trying. Many churches, including the Domkirche (Tues during Aug; Ⓦwww.kirchen.net/domkonzerte), also offer **organ recitals** throughout the year. Look out for posters or ask the tourist office if there's anything happening during your stay.

There's a host of year-round musical events and concerts aimed at **tourists**; standards of musicianship are invariably high, and we've listed a selection below.

Tourist-oriented shows

Mozart Dinner Concerts Popular Mozart pieces performed by musicians in period costume, in the Stiftskeller, St Peter's opulent Baroque function room. Ticket price includes dinner. Daily in summer, around 5 times weekly in winter (no concerts mid-Jan). Contact Salzburger Konzertgesellschaft, Getreidegasse 31 Ⓣ0662/828695-0, Ⓦwww.mozartdinnerconcert.com. Tickets from €45. There are also lunch concerts in the same venue.

Salzburger Festungskonzerte Ⓣ0662/825858, Ⓦwww.mozartfestival.at. A small chamber orchestra plays a Mozart's greatest-hits package in the Fürstenzimmer of the Hohensalzburg fortress. Performances all year round, and candlelit dinners with music (€47–51 per person) are sometimes on offer.

Salzburg Lunch Concerts Gothic Hall of the Blasiuskirche on Bürgerspitalgasse. Excerpts from Mozart and a buffet lunch, Fri 1pm late May to mid-Sept. Ⓦwww.lunchconcerts.at.

Salzburger Marionettentheater Schwarzstr 24 Ⓣ0662/872406. Popular operas and operettas (usually works by Johann Strauss, Offenbach and Mozart) performed by puppets backed by a playback tape. It can be a bit hard going for younger children, but most adults will marvel at the imaginative set designs and dexterous puppeteering. Tickets from €18.

Schlosskonzerte in the Schloss Mirabell Chamber music with a strong, though not wholly, Mozart theme; performances at least a couple of times a week throughout the year – daily during peak tourist season. Salzburger Schlosskonzerte, Mozarts Wohnhaus, Theatergasse 2 Ⓣ0662/848586, Ⓦwww.salzburger-schlosskonzerte.at.

Rock, pop, jazz and clubbing

For **rock and pop**, the *Rockhouse*, Schallmooser Hauptstr 46 (⊕0662/884914-0, ⓦwww.rockhouse.at; bus #4), is the main venue for medium-sized touring bands. *ARGEKultur*, Josef Preiss Allee 16 (⊕0662/848784-0, ⓦwww.argekultur.at; bus #5 or #25), also features rock, **world music** and alternative theatre.

The Sound of Music

Despite being the most successful advertisement for Austrian tourism ever, the Oscar-winning 1965 film **The Sound of Music** – dubbed into German and released under the unmemorable title of *Meine Lieder, meine Träume* ("My songs, my dreams") – flopped in Austria itself. It didn't help that a German-language version of the Von Trapp story – directed, bizarrely enough, by Nazi favourite Wolfgang Liebeneiner – had already been a major hit. In the English-speaking world, the recent success of *Sing-Along-A-Sound-of-Music*, in which the audience is encouraged to dress up as nuns, has reconfirmed the film's status as a kitsch classic. The film was finally shown on Austrian television in 2001, and latterly found its way onto the repertoire of the Vienna Volksoper.

Notoriously dubbed "The Sound of Mucus" by its male lead, Christopher Plummer, the film tells the over-romanticized, but essentially true, story of the Von Trapp family, as related in Maria von Trapp's 1949 reminiscences **The Story of the Trapp Family Singers**. However, the film-makers condensed the entire story into one hectic summer. In reality, Maria and Captain von Trapp married in 1927, and only started their singing career after losing everything in the Depression. By the time of the Anschluss in 1938 (the year in which the film is set), they were internationally famous – so much so that they were invited to sing at Hitler's birthday party. It was this, and the fact that Maria was pregnant with their second child, as much as the fact that the captain had received his call-up papers, that prompted them to take the train over the border into Italy. (And, for the record, it was the butler who was the Nazi, not poor old Rolf, the postboy). Later that year, they sailed to America, settling in Stowe, Vermont, where they set up a music camp and lodge. The captain died in 1947, but the rest of the family enjoyed enormous success until they abandoned the singing in 1956. Maria died in 1987, aged 82, but the lodge is still going strong.

A **guided minibus tour** of sights associated with the film has become an essential part of the Salzburg experience for many, even if only to wallow in kitsch in the company of other English-speaking tourists. There's little to choose between the companies offering tours: Bob's Special Tours at Rudolfskai 38 (€40; ⊕0662/8495-11, ⓦwww.bobstours.com), Panorama Tours (€35; ⊕0662/874029, ⓦwww.panoramatours.com) and Salzburg Sightseeing Tours (€35; ⊕0662/881616; ⓦwww.salzburg-sightseeingtours.at), both with offices on Mirabellplatz. Four-hour-long tours depart twice daily (transfers from your hotel are usually included in the price), and follow a similar itinerary, taking in Salzburg's Nonnberg convent (see p.385), where Maria was a novice, the Mirabellgarten (see p.389), where they sing "Do-Re-Mi", the Rock Riding School of the Festspielhaus, where they performed their farewell show, Schloss Leopoldskron, the exterior of which was used to represent the back of the Von Trapp family home, the gardens of Schloss Hellbrunn (see p.390), 5km south of the city centre, where a summerhouse was the setting for "Sixteen Going on Seventeen", the Salzkammergut landscapes seen at the start of the film and the church at Mondsee (see p.432), used for the wedding. All these places can, of course, be visited without going on a tour.

For insatiable fans, from May to October there's a nightly *Sound of Music* show in the Sternbrau, Griesgasse 23 (⊕0662/826617, ⓦwww.soundofsalzburgshow.com; €46 with dinner, €31 without), with classically trained singers performing songs from the film, plus operetta favourites and Mozart numbers. The food – as if you needed to ask – includes schnitzel with noodles and crisp apple strudel.

The **alternative** end of the rock spectrum forms part of the **Sommer Szene Festival** in June and July, which also features contemporary dance and experimental theatre. Advance information is available from *Szene*, Anton-Neumayr-Platz 2, A-5020 Salzburg (Ⓣ0662/843448, Ⓦwww.sommerszene.net).

For **jazz**, there's the *Jazzit* club and café at Elisabethstr 11 (Ⓣ0662/883264, Ⓦwww.jazzit.at), open Monday to Saturday from 6pm for live jazz and world music, and the *Jazzclub Life* at Schallmooser Hauptstr 50 (Ⓣ0664/213 4548, Ⓦwww.jazzclub-life.at); the major jazz event is the **Salzburger Jazz Herbst** festival in early November which attracts top-ranking performers. Advance programme details are available from Vienna Entertainment (Ⓣ01/504 8500, Ⓦwww.viennaentertainment.com).

The **clubbing** scene in Salzburg is increasingly varied, with *Republic*, *ARGE Nonntal* and the *Rockhouse Bar* (see above) offering anything from off-the-wall electronics to mainstream techno. *The Cave*, Leopoldskronstr 5 (Ⓦwww.cave-club.at), is the city's main dance club, a former beer cellar, air raid shelter and quarry, with big-name international DJs and events most Fridays and Saturdays from 10pm.

To find out what's on, scour the pages of *Salzburger Monat*, look out for street posters, or pick up flyers from the Musikladen record shop at Linzergasse 58.

Theatre

Salzburg has one of Austria's most prestigious dramatic institutions, the **Salzburger Landestheater**, the city's main venue for top-quality, serious work (Schwarzstr 22 Ⓣ0662/871512-0, Ⓦwww.salzburger-landestheater.at). Drama plays an important part in the **Salzburger Festspiele** (see "Classical music", p.395), most notably in the annual production of Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's *Jedermann* (an adaptation of the medieval English mystery play *Everyman*) on an outdoor stage in the Domplatz for the duration of the Festival. Seats are usually sold out weeks in advance, but tickets for standing places are sold on the day (see above for ticket outlets).

For non-German speakers the drawback of most drama in Salzburg is the language, although some of the more avant-garde work can be visually interesting enough to make knowledge of the language irrelevant. Venues include: the **Kleines Theater**, Schallmooser Hauptstr 50 (Ⓣ0662/872154, Ⓦwww.kleines-theater.at; bus #4), for cabaret and comedy; **ARGEKultur**, Josef Preiss Allee 16 (Ⓣ0662/848784-0, Ⓦwww.argekultur.at; bus #5 or #25), for experimental theatre; and **Schauspielhaus Salzburg**, fifteen minutes' walk south of the Altstadt at Erzabt-Klotz-Str 22 (Ⓣ0662/8085, Ⓦwww.ebuehne.at), for a mixture of mainstream and experimental drama.

Listings

Adventure sports Crocodile Sports, Karl-Reisenbichlerstr 20 (Ⓣ0662/642907, Ⓦwww.crocodile-sports.com), organize paragliding, canyoning, caving, mountain biking and rafting.

Airlines Austrian Airlines (including Austrian Arrows and Lauda Air) Ⓣ0820/737800; Lufthansa Ⓣ0810/1025 80 80; Ryanair Ⓣ0900/210240, Thomsonfly Ⓣ01/9289 598.

Airport information Ⓣ0662/8580-251, Ⓦwww.salzburg-airport.com.

Bike rental Topbike Radverleih (Ⓣ06272/4656, Ⓦwww.topbike.at; April–June & Sept–Oct 10am–5pm, July & Aug 9am–7pm) is on the south side of the Hauptbahnhof. They give 20 percent off with a valid rail ticket, and also sell self-guided audio tours by bike. They have another location on the Franz-Josef-Kai by the Staatsbrücke.

Car rental Avis, Ferdinand-Porsche-Str 7 (☎0662/877278), and at the airport (☎0662/877278); Budget, at the airport (☎0662/855038); Europcar at Gniglerstr 12 (☎00662/871616) and at the airport (☎0664/8258604); Hertz, Ferdinand Porsche Str 7 (☎0662/876674), and at the airport (☎0662/852086).

Cinemas Current international films, usually dubbed into German, are shown at Cineplexx, Fanny von Lehnhert Str 4 (☎0662/460101, ⓦwww.cineplexx.at); and Mozartkino, Kaigasse 33 (☎0662/842222). Das Kino, Giselakai 11 (☎0662/873100, ⓦwww.daskino.at), is the place to go for art-house and cult films often in the original language.

Consulates South Africa, Buchenweg 14, 5061 Elsbethen-Glasenbach (Mon–Thurs 3–5pm; ☎0662/622035); UK, Alter Markt 4 (Mon–Fri 9am–noon; ☎0662/848133). Other nationals should contact their embassy in Vienna.

Exchange Banks are open Mon–Fri 8.30am–12.30pm & 2–4.30pm. Otherwise try the exchange counter at the train station (Mon–Fri 8.30am–8pm, Sat 8.30am–4pm), Salzburger Sparkasse at the airport (daily 8am–4pm); or the counter at 5 Mozartplatz (Mon–Fri 9am–5.30pm, Sat 9am–noon).

Football Austrian champions three times in the 90s, local team Red Bull Salzburg play at the EM Stadion in Wals-Siezenheim (☎0662/433332; bus #1 or #28 from F-Hanusch-Platz). Most matches are played on Sat.

Gay organizations HOSI (Homosexuelle Initiative), Müllner Hauptstr 11 ☎0662/435927, ⓦwww.hosi.or.at.

Hospital Landeskrankenhaus Salzburg, north of the Altstadt at Müllner Hauptstr 48 ☎0662/44820. In an emergency call ☎141.

Ice skating Eisarena Kunsteisbahn, on the right bank at Hermann-Bahr-Promenade 2 (daily 10am–4.15pm; buses #6 or #7 from Rudolfskai to Volksgarten). Entry €3.70, skate hire €3.

Internet access Internet Café Cybar, Mozartplatz 5 (daily 9am–10pm; €2 minimum charge) has modern computers and fast connections, but is expensive; alternatives can be found in Schallmooser Hauptstr.

Laundry Norge Exquisit, Paris-Lodron-Str 14 (Mon–Fri 7.30am–6pm, Sat 8am–noon).

Left luggage Lockers at the main train station.

Lost property Fundamt, Schloss Mirabell (to left side of main entrance; ☎0662/8072 3580); Mon–Thurs 7.30am–4pm, Fri 7.30am–1pm.

Police The main police station is 4km south of the centre, in the direction of the Salzburg-Süd autobahn junction, at Alpenstr 90 ☎0662/63830. Emergency call ☎133.

Post office The main post office is at Residenzplatz 9 (Mon–Fri 7am–6.30pm, Sat 8–10am); the branch at the train station is open Mon–Fri 8am–6pm.

Pharmacies Elisabeth-Apotheke, Elisabethstr 1 (☎0662/871484), is near the train station. For emergencies, details of duty pharmacies are posted in all pharmacy windows.

Sightseeing tours Horse-drawn Fiakers offer atmospheric – if expensive – sightseeing tours of the Altstadt. Panorama Tours, Mirabellplatz, by St Andrä church (☎0662/874029,ⓦwww.panoramatours.com) and Salzburg Sightseeing Tours, Mirabellplatz 2 (☎0662/881616, ⓦwww.salzburgsightseeingtours.at), both offer several city tours by bus daily, lasting 1hr; €18.

Swimming Paracelsus Bad, Auerspergstr 2, is a large, modern indoor pool complete with water jets, slide and children's section; bathing costumes are optional.

Taxis There are taxi ranks at the main train station, airport and Residenzplatz. Or phone ☎8111.

Transport information ☎0662/93000-0 or 051717 for national rail or ☎0662/44801 500 for local rail and bus.

The Salzburger Land

South of Salzburg, most of the attractions in the rest of the province are outdoors, providing an alpine counterweight to the urban refinements of the Land capital. Many travellers heading for Innsbruck and the west miss out on this area, following instead the direct route, which cuts through a corner of Germany before re-entering Austria at Kufstein in the Tyrol. An alternative, and worthwhile, route forges its way south up the **Salzach Valley** through an area of increasingly

The SalzburgerLand Card

If you're spending a week or so in Salzburger Land in the summer months it's well worth enquiring at tourist offices about the **SalzburgerLand Card**, which for €39 for six days (€19.50 for children) gives free access to 190 sights and attractions throughout the region, including 24 hours of free admission and public transport in the city of Salzburg itself.

rugged mountains. The salt mines and Celtic museum at **Hallein**, and the ice caves and castle at **Werfen** are the main destinations here, and both towns can be treated as day-trips from Salzburg. At **St Johann im Pongau**, an important skiing and hiking centre, the main Salzach Valley route veers west towards **Zell am See**, a classic lakes-and-mountains resort that provides the perfect base from which to strike south into the mountains of the **Hohe Tauern**, home to Austria's highest peak, the **Grossglockner**. South of St Johann, the **Gasteinertal** centres on the evocative nineteenth-century spa resort of **Badgastein**, ideally placed for explorations of the eastern Hohe Tauern.

Accessing the region is straightforward: frequent local S-bahn trains reach Hallein in less than half an hour from Salzburg, continuing hourly to St Johann; some continue to Zell am See, which is also served by faster regional expresses, while the Gasteinertal is served by trains on the Salzburg–Villach line every two hours.

Hallein and around

Some fifteen kilometres south of Salzburg, **HALLEIN** has been synonymous with the **salt trade** since the sixth century BC. Celts from Hallstaat in the Salzkammergut opened up the salt mines in the hills around Bad Dürrnberg, immediately west of Hallein, and, apart from a period of abandonment following the departure of the Romans in the fifth century, the mines have been the dominant factor in the town's development ever since. While commercial salt extraction came to an end here in 1989, since then tours of the **Bad Dürrnberg show-mine** have constituted one of the biggest tourist attractions in the region. The historic centre of Hallein itself warrants a leisurely stroll, and the local museum has one of the country's richest collections of **Celtic artefacts**. Together Hallein and Bad Dürrnberg make a popular day-trip from Salzburg.

The Town

Hallein's historic importance as a salt-processing and distribution point is evident in the centre's charming houses, which once belonged to the wealthy merchants who controlled the trade. This clutch of tastefully restored seventeenth-century buildings, resplendent in shades of blue and salmon pink, line the compact, pedestrianized squares that form the core of the town – **Unterer Markt**, **Oberer Markt**, **Bayrhamerplatz** and **Kornsteinplatz**.

Hallein's **Celtic heritage** is extensively displayed at the **Keltenmuseum,** (daily 9am–5pm; €6), a few steps north of Unterer Markt on the river at Pflegerplatz 5. Housed in the building from which the salt trade was once administered, the museum holds a well-presented collection of earthenware, daggers and bronze jewellery (labelled in German only; English guidebook available). The star exhibit is the *Schnabelkanne*, or beaked jug, of Dürrnberg,

found in a princely grave near the salt mine, and decorated with a stylized leonine beast (a possible representation of the Celtic god Taranis) with a human head in its mouth. The next floor up concentrates on the history of the salt industry from the Middle Ages onwards, with models of the brine pipelines that brought the dissolved salt down from the mountain, the salt-panning workshops, which once stood on an island in the River Salzach, and the boats that ferried the stuff downstream. All stages of the production process feature in a cycle of eighteenth-century paintings, covering the walls of three rooms originally decorated for Sigismund III Graf von Schrattenbach, penultimate Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.

Hallein's parish church on Gruberplatz has an extraordinary concrete tower, built in 1967 to replace the original, destroyed during World War II. The house opposite was for 28 years the home of Silent Night composer Franz Xaver Gruber, and in addition to the cluster of commemorative plaques on the exterior there's a small **Stille Nacht-Museum** inside (daily 3–5pm; €2), whose star attraction is the guitar on which Joseph Mohr played the carol at its first performance in 1818. Gruber's tomb rests against an outside wall facing the church.

Bad Dürrnberg

Hourly buses connect Hallein train station with the hillside village of **BAD DÜRRNBERG**, a steep two-kilometre climb to the west. Tours of the **salt mine** (daily April–Oct 9am–5pm; Nov–March 10am–3pm; €16.50; ticket includes entry to Hallein's museums) last about ninety minutes and begin with a ride on the **Grubenbahn**, or underground train, followed by a sound-and-light show introducing the history of the mine, and a descent to lower galleries via a wooden slide – a mode of transport characteristic of Austrian mines, rather like sitting astride a large banister and letting yourself go (and explaining why the *Arschleder* is such a common feature of traditional Austrian mining uniforms). Another highlight is a trip across an underground lake on a wooden raft. Wear sensible shoes and warm clothing.

It's thought that the **Celts** of Hallstaat (see p.449) opened up Dürrnberg as a centre of salt production some 2500 years ago, partly because their Hallstaat mines were increasingly liable to rock falls and floods, but also due to the excellent transport opportunities afforded by the River Salzach in the valley below. Until the arrival of the Romans, a Celtic community thrived beside the mine workings, now remembered in the open-air **Keltendorf** (same hours as mine; included in mine ticket) outside the mine entrance. Alongside replicas of Iron Age huts and barns is the reconstruction of a princely grave, showing how the sumptuously clad body of the deceased would have been laid out on a chariot and surrounded by the weapons, drinking flasks and food necessary for a journey to the afterlife.

Surrounded by alpine meadows, Bad Dürrnberg is also a good spot for **walking** – a chairlift at the southern end of the village ascends to a café-restaurant just below the summit of the 1337-metre-high Zinken, which marks the border between Austria and Bavaria. In summer, Austria's longest toboggan ride, the **Sommerrodelbahn** (July to mid-Sept daily 10am–6pm; May–June & mid-Sept to mid-Oct Mon–Fri 11am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10.30am–5pm; €8.80 including chairlift ascent), zigzags down the mountain beside the chairlift.

Practicalities

The main north–south road and rail routes keep to the east bank of the River Salzach; Hallein's historic centre is on the west bank. From the **train station**,

it's a straightforward westward walk to the river, where a right turn onto the Perninsel from the main bridge leads to the **tourist office** at Mauttorpromenade 6 (Mon–Fri 9am–5.30pm; July & Aug until 7pm; ⓣ06245/85394, ⓦwww.hallein.com). Here accommodation in **pensions** (❷–❸) or **private rooms** (❶) can be arranged, some in Hallein itself, though most are above the town in Bad Dürrnberg. There's a shortage of decent **hotels** in the centre, although *Bockwirt*, a short walk from the tourist office at Thunstr 12 (ⓣ06245/80623, ⓕ80623-3; ❸), has inexpensive rooms in a historic building in the old town; the more comfortable *Hafnerwirt*, handily placed for the train station on the east side of the river at Salzachtalstr 3 (ⓣ06245/80319, ⓦwww.hafnerwirt.com; ❻), is a good-value three-star establishment, offering en-suite facilities, satellite TV and phone in its rooms. Up in Bad Dürrnberg, *Hochdürrnberg*, Rumpelgasse 14 (ⓣ06245/75183, ⓦwww.hochduerrnberg.at; ❸), is a small chalet-style pension offering cosy rooms with shared facilities, just 100m from the German border.

Hallein is, unusually for Austria, a place where traditional Austrian fare is thin on the ground and ethnic **eating** has the edge; *Papaya*, two minutes' southeast of the centre at Griesplatz 8, is a cosmopolitan mish-mash of Austrian and Italian with a few Asian dishes, open until 11pm; *Tepito*, beside the *Hafnerwirt* hotel (you'll pass it on the way into town from the station), serves Mexican food and steaks in lively surroundings. It's also good for evening **drinking**; otherwise try the *Outback* Australian pub next door (until 5am Fri & Sat) or *Fallschirm* on Oberer Markt, an informal, friendly place that's open until 2am. The best spot for cake and coffee is *Café-Konditorei Braun* at Unterer Markt 8.

Werfen and around

Forty kilometres south of Salzburg, **WERFEN** draws day-trippers to see the impressive, fanciful **Festung Hohensalzburg** presiding over the village itself, and **Eisriesenwelt**, the giant ice caves in the mountainside to the northeast. Werfen is easy to reach by frequent S-bahn and regional express trains, but you should allow plenty of time to reach the caves – and you'll need an early start if you're intent on seeing the caves and fortress the same day.

Werfen itself comprises a single street and a clutch of *Gasthöfe* and shops, but its impressive geographical situation wedged between sheer mountains, makes it an evocative place to stay for a night or two. There's a **tourist office** (mid-July to mid-Aug Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat 5–7pm; mid-Aug to mid-July Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; ⓣ06468/5388, ⓦwww.werfen.at) at Markt 24 – the main street – with a list of **private rooms** (❶–❸). The nearby *Goldener Hirsch*, Markt 28 (ⓣ06486/5342; ❷), has simple en suites, while the plush *Gasthof Obauer*, further along at Markt 46 (ⓣ06486/5212-0, ⓦwww.obauer.com; ❼), is a medieval house with stylish, en-suite rooms. The smart **restaurant** at the *Obauer* has a nationwide reputation for its excellent Austrian/modern European cuisine, with dishes such as oriental-spiced ragout of Werfen lamb on menus from €35. *Goldener Hirsch* serves up the usual schnitzels, and the *Alte Post*, also on Markt, offers a limited range of cheap Austrian standards.

Festung Hohensalzburg

Immediately visible from all points of arrival, and a brisk fifteen-minute walk from Werfen train station, the **Festung Hohenwerfen** (April, Oct & Nov 9.30am–4pm; May, June & Sept 9am–5pm; July & Aug 9am–6pm; €10)

▲ Festung Hohensalzburg

dominates the village from a rocky outcrop to the north. Subjected to a cycle of sackings, fires and rebuildings, the fortress has changed immeasurably since Salzburg's Archbishop Gebhard von Felsenstein first fortified the spot as insurance against Bavarian incursions in the eleventh century. The obligatory guided tour (1hr: with English audio guide, frequency depends on demand) takes you from an impressive inner courtyard to the chapel, where Gothic fresco fragments depicting the Apocalypse are preserved, before passing through state rooms and a torture chamber to the belfry, which offers impressive views of the Salzach Valley and the encroaching craggy peaks. There are daily **falconry displays** at 11am and 3pm (same ticket).

Eisriesenwelt(The ice caves)

Getting to **Eisriesenwelt** is a scenic excursion in itself, involving a road and cable-car ascent to reach the cave entrance 1641m above the valley floor, and providing views back towards Werfen and the castle. You can drive part way, though the route is up a 21 percent incline; alternatively, buses depart from Werfen train station at 8.20am, 10.20am, 12.20pm & 2.20pm, with more frequent departures from the official departure point across the river from the station. To reach it, cross the river from the station then turn right along the riverside Erzherzog Eugen Allee. Bus drivers sell a combined ticket covering bus, cable car and cave for €22.60. The bus takes you uphill as far as the car park at the road's end 5km above Werfen to the northeast. From there it's a ten-minute walk to the cable-car station .The caves are only accessible by 75-minute guided tour (usually hourly, more frequently at peak periods; daily July & Aug 9.30am–4.30pm; May–June & Sept–Oct 9.30am–3.30pm; €19 with cable car, €8.50 without cable car or bus), which leads past some **spectacular ice formations**, diving through narrow passageways (involving some steep climbs) before emerging into breathtaking, imaginatively lit galleries. It's cold enough to warrant a sweater or jacket, so come prepared.

Central Salzburger Land

Eight kilometres south of Werfen, there's a parting of the ways at Bischofshofen, as one rail line heads westwards to **St Johann im Pongau**, Zell am See and the Tyrol, and the other turns eastwards towards Styria, running along the wide valley floor of the Ennstal with the magnificent ridge of the **Niedere Tauern** range rising to the south.

St Johann im Pongau

Main town of the **Pongau**, an area of lush alpine pastures that stretches from Bischofshofen in the north to the mouth of the Gasteinertal in the southwest, bustling **ST JOHANN** is, together with its hotel-filled suburb of **Alpendorf**, 3km uphill to the southeast, a popular centre for sporting activities year-round, though Alpendorf in particular can be very quiet outside peak season. Once the winter snows have melted and the **skiers** have departed, the slopes cater to **walkers**, while **swimming** and **tennis** are the summertime activities of choice in town.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Both the main Bundesstrasse and the **train station** are on the west bank of the Salzach, opposite the town itself. Turn right outside the train station and cross the river to reach the snaking Hauptstrasse, which curls round Untermarkt before climbing into Obermarkt, where the **tourist office** is on the main road at Ing. L. Pech-Str 1 (Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ06412/6036, ⓦwww.sanktjohann.com). The tourist office handles **private rooms** (❷–❸) in St Johann and Alpendorf, as well as farmhouse accommodation (❷) in neighbouring villages – although you'll probably need your own transport to reach the latter.

There are a couple of **youth hostels** nearby: the *Schlosshof*, Liechtensteinklammstr 144 (ⓣ06412/6394, ⓦwww.schlosshof.co.at) in **Plankenau**, 2km south of town on the way to the Liechtensteinklamm, and the *Jugendhotel Weitenmoos* at Operalpendorf 102 in Alpendorf (ⓣ06412/6222, ⓦwww.weitenmoos.at). Two of St Johann's well-appointed **campsites** are open all year round: *Wieshof* (ⓣ06412/8519, ⓦwww.camping-wieshof.at) is nearest the

The Pongauer Perchtenlauf

One of Austria's oddest midwinter folk rituals, the **Pongauer Perchtenlauf** takes place on the night of January 5–6. It's an annual event that rotates on a four-yearly cycle between the Pongau towns of Altenmarkt, Bischofshofen, Badgastein and St Johann.

The Perchtenlauf itself is a procession of young men dressed in the white costumes and masks of the *Schiachperchten*, kindly spirits who wave birch twigs and jangle cowbells in order to ward off demons and herald a year full of bumper harvests and good fortune. They're accompanied by *Schönperchten* who wear enormous headdresses, some of which weigh up to 50kg, their finery designed to bring light to a world subsumed in midwinter darkness. Some head-dresses are decorated with mirrors, to scare away evil spirits afraid of seeing their own reflection. Performances of the Perchtenlauf are traditionally an all-male affair, which – seeing as the Schönperchten are supposed to be accompanied by young wenches – inevitably involves a certain amount of cross-dressing.

The Pongauer Perchtenlauf takes place in St Johann in 2009, Badgastein in 2010 and Altenmarkt in 2011.

train station, in Untermarkt just off the Bundesstrasse, while *Kastenhof* (☎06412/5490, ⓦwww.kastenhof.at) lies at the southern end of town, off the road to the Liechtensteinklamm.

Among the best value of the smaller **hotels** are the *Hirschenwirt*, Bundesstr 1 (☎06412/6012, ⓦwww.hirschenwirt.com; ③), and the *Lechner*, Kasernstr 26 (☎06412/4262, ⓦwww.gasthoflechner.at; ③), a cosy downtown hotel in Untermarkt, whose rooms come with en-suite facilities. Of the bigger and more luxurious places that cluster in Alpendorf, *Pichler's*, Alpendorf 10 (☎06412/6210, ⓦwww.sporthotel-pichler.at; ⑤) is cheaper than most.

The town and around

Stretched along the eastern side of the River Salzach, St Johann is divided into two parts, **Obermarkt**, built on a bluff surmounted by the distinctive twin towers of the Domkirche, and **Untermarkt** on the river bank below it. You might think the place looks comparatively modern, and that's because it was largely destroyed by fire in 1855, so little of real vintage survives. People from all across the Habsburg monarchy raised money to rebuild the church, hence its current, neo-Gothic appearance. Today Obermarkt is dominated as much by the massive Stadtgalerie shopping centre as by the church; meanwhile, St Johann remains a garrison town, with the Krobatin barracks taking up a considerable area.

For those who have come to ski, local passes (peak season 1.5 day €64; six-day €176) cover a large area of interlinked pistes and lifts – known as the Sportwelt Amadé – which extends from St Johann, through the nearby villages of Wagrain and Flachau as far as Radstadt, 25km to the east. Slopes are best suited to beginners and intermediates. For summer walkers, the most direct route to the hills is from **Alpendorf**, 3km to the south of St Johann (and accessible by three buses daily), where the Alpendorf Bergbahn gondola (summer season July–Sept daily 9am–5pm; May, June & Oct Wed & Sun 9am–5pm; €12.40 return; winter season 22 Dec to end March, day pass €30) leads up onto the pasture-covered slopes of the Gernkogel, from where a chairlift (July 22 to Sept 9 daily 9.30am–4.30pm; €4.60 return) continues to the 1787-metre summit.

Nestling in a wooded valley 4km south of St Johann, the **Liechtensteinklamm** (daily: May–Sept 8am–6pm; Oct 9am–4pm; €3.50) is, by virtue of its extreme depth and narrowness, one of the most dramatic gorges in the Alps. The gorge is accessed by means of wooden walkways wedged against the sheer rock walls; with the torrent frothing energetically far below, it's an exhilarating trip. The gorge is easy to reach on foot in about an hour: from St Johann head south to the village of Plankenau, where signposted roads and paths bear off to the right; from Alpendorf, a footpath at the southern end of the village leads down to the gorge.

Eating and drinking

Restaurants offering standard Austrian fare abound in St Johann: the *Bürgerstube*, Hauptstr 22, is the best place in which to sample local cuisine at reasonable prices, with rustic wooden tables and chairs lending the place a homely atmosphere. *Bologna*, midway between Ober- and Untermarkt in the Stadtgalerie at Hans-Kappacher Str 1, is an inexpensive Italian, while *Lotus*, on Hauptstrasse in Untermarkt, is a bright and roomy Chinese.

Tschecherl, Wagrainerstr 4, is a popular smart but relaxed **drinking** venue in Obermarkt which is usually busy all year round; directly opposite, *Mamasitas* at no. 3 is a Mexican bar and restaurant which serves hot food until 1am. Up the hill in Alpendorf, *Oberforsthof-alm* is a year-round drinking and dancing venue, frequently featuring live music (usually folk), and attracting a youngish, partying crowd from all over the Salzburger Land.

The Samsonumzug in the Lungau

The Lungau is an isolated corner of the Salzburger Land where archaic folk traditions have survived, most spectacular of which is the **Samsonumzug**, or Samson procession, which takes place in TamsWEg, approximately 80km southeast of St Johann, on several summer feast days, notably Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam, in late May), the last weekend in July and the first Sunday in August. An effigy of Samson, accompanied by two dwarfs and the town band, is paraded through the streets. One theory links the Samson effigy to giant figures constructed by sixteenth-century locals in order to frighten off the Turks, but the procession is more likely the Christianized version of some indecipherable pagan ritual.

The Gasteinertal

West of St Johann im Pongau, a main road and rail route splits off to head south up the **Gasteinertal**, before tunnelling under the **Hohe Tauern** mountains into Carinthia. Popular with skiers and a paradise for hikers, the Gasteinertal was developed as a centre for tourism early in the nineteenth century, when the **hot springs** of Badgastein attracted an influx of wealthy central Europeans eager to take the cure. Still the valley's main centre, **Badgastein** remains one of Austria's most eccentric resorts, a stately cluster of nineteenth-century hotels catering to a strange mixture of hearty outdoors enthusiasts and spa patients. Lower down the valley, the spa town of **Bad Hofgastein** has a more unambiguously modern feel. Both provide access to the surrounding mountains, although Badgastein and its satellites, **Böckstein** and **Sportgastein**, nestling beneath the eastern spur of the Hohe Tauern, stand closest to the really spectacular alpine terrain. At the entrance to the valley, the cave at **Klammstein** makes for an interesting stop-off.

As far as **winter sports** are concerned, the slopes in the Gasteinertal offer a wider range of possibilities than anywhere else in the Salzburger Land save for Zell am See–Kaprun (see p.412). There's a variety of pistes suitable for beginners and intermediates above Bad Hofgastein, Badgastein and in the Angertal (a side-valley located between Bad Hofgastein and Badgastein), which are connected to each other by the chairlift network (one day pass €38); a second, smaller complex of lifts centres on Dorfgastein and the Grossarltal. There's enough to keep experienced skiers happy here too: Sportgastein offers off-piste skiing, and there are several black runs on the Graukogel just above Badgastein. Snowboarders are catered for with snowboarding schools at all the valley's main centres. In addition, there are 90km of cross-country skiing routes, including some at high altitude.

The main Carinthia-bound **rail line** runs up the Gasteinertal, leaving the main Salzach Valley route at Schwarzach-St Veit, though faster express trains don't necessarily stop in the valley itself, and **buses** are the best way of getting around once you're here.

Klammstein and Dorfgastein

The main road route from the Salzach Valley emerges into the Gasteinertal at **KLAMMSTEIN**, where the **Naturhöhle** (July & Aug guided tours on the hour 10am–4pm; Easter to June & Sept four tours daily between 11am–3pm; closed Tues; €8) was once used by local Protestants for clandestine prayer. The chamber where they met has been dubbed the **Fledermaus-Dom**, or bat cathedral. The cave entrance is off the main road to the east, about 35 minutes by foot from the well-signposted car park. The nearby sixteenth-century **Burg**

Klammstein (Tues–Sun 11am–6pm; €4) is less engrossing, though children might enjoy the Gespensterschau or ghost show, a series of tableaux illustrating the spirits said to inhabit the nearby cave.

Five kilometres further up the valley, **DORFGASTEIN** lacks the thermal springs that supply the settlements to the south, and consequently tourism here is low-key. Things liven up in the winter, due to the village's nascent reputation for snowboarding. A two-stage gondola rises from the village (€18 for the full return trip; winter day pass €37.50) to the 2033-metre Fulseck. In the centre are a number of small *Gasthöfe* and a **tourist office** at the side of the main road (Mon–Fri 9am–5.30pm; ⓣ06433/3393-460, ⓦwww.dorfgastein.net); there are plenty of **private rooms** (❷–❹). Note that accommodation in the Gasteinertal is subject to small *Kur*-or *Ortstaxe* – a local tourist tax.

Bad Hofgastein

In contrast to the rustic charm of Dorfgastein and the post-imperial splendours of Badgastein, **BAD HOFGASTEIN** is a predominantly upmarket, modern spa fed by the waters piped down from the head of the valley, its hotels grouped around a pedestrianized centre bordered by leafy parks. In summer, older visitors predominate and there's a genteel feel. There's nothing of any vintage save for the late-Gothic **Pfarrkirche** on the main square. Inside, the high altar features an early sixteenth-century *Madonna and Child* by a follower of Michael Pacher, flanked by contrasting eighteenth-century statuettes – featuring, from left to right, SS Rupert, Dominic, Catherine and Virgil. The whole thing is topped off by an allegory of the Holy Trinity after plans by **Fischer von Erlach** – the Father is on the right holding a globe, the Son on the left, and the Holy Spirit hovering between them in the form of a dove. Note, too, the cherub-bedecked pulpit featuring another traditional piece of symbolism common in areas once strongly Protestant – the outstretched arm holding a crucifix, depicting the triumph of the Catholic Church.

On the western side of the town centre, a direct route into the hills is provided by the **Schlossalmbahn** (late May to mid-Oct & Dec–April hourly 8am–4pm; return trip €18, last descent at 4.40pm), which climbs in two stages: by funicular to the 1302-metre **Kitzstein Alm**, then by cable car to the 2051-metre **Kleine Scharte**, where there's a mountain café-restaurant and impressive views of the peaks over on the opposite side of the valley. About 1km south of the funicular station, roads ascend into the **Angertal**, an important skiing area in winter and attractive walking area in summer – but the gondola and chairlifts here are only open during the winter.

Practicalities

The main **train station** is about 3km north of town, and most arrivals are met by a local bus that takes you into the centre. The town's **bus station**, served by regular Badgastein–Schwarzach services, is just 500m west of the centre on the main road through the valley. The **tourist office** in the Kongresszentrum in the pedestrianized zone (Mon–Thurs 8am–6pm, Fri 8am–4pm; ⓣ06432/3393-260, ⓦwww.gastein.com/en-gastein-bad_hofgastein.htm) offers a deluge of information on local spa facilities. Bad Hofgastein isn't as characterful as Badgastein, but the tourist office has innumerable **private rooms** (❷–❹) and there are some smart spa **hotels**: the five-star *Grand Park*, Kurgartenstr 26 (ⓣ06432/6356-0, ⓦwww.grandparkhotel.at; ❾), is close to the centre and has elegant, balconied rooms, a thermal pool, massage, sauna and solarium, while *Sporthotel Alpina*, Parkstr 13 (ⓣ06432/8475, ⓦwww.alpina-hotel.com; ❽), a good four star choice, offers similar facilities but without the fin-de-siècle pretensions.

For **eating**, *Café Röck*, on a small square just west of the church, is good for inexpensive daytime *knödl* and snacks; *Kraut & Rüben*, Pirkerstr 3, is a large vegetarian restaurant with a spacious terrace in summer; and *Gasthof zur Alten Post*, just outside the Pfarrkirche, serves traditional Austrian food including fish and game and at least one vegetarian choice. The *Lucaffe* café bar in the Galerie shopping mall is a smart spot for late-night **drinking**.

To experience the soothing effect of the **spa waters**, head for the Alpen Therme in the centre, an impressive modern indoor pool and sauna complex with thermal spring-fed indoor and outdoor pools – but it can get pretty crowded, and it's expensive if all you want is a quick swim (daily 9am–9pm; four-hour card €20.50).

Badgastein

Ranged across the head of the valley where the **Gasteiner Ache** descends in a series of cascades, the grand hotels of **BADGASTEIN** gaze down on the Gasteinertal like rows of seating in some fin de siècle amphitheatre. Although a **spa** since medieval times, Badgastein didn't really take off until the early nineteenth century, when a stream of society figures – led by Archduke Johann (see p.455), who built the *Meranhaus* here in 1828 – descended here to take the cure. Emperor Franz-Josef, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany and Bismarck were among those who followed. The town has undergone numerous face-lifts since, but a certain Austro-Hungarian ambience lingers, and attempts to turn it back into a chic society resort – complete with stylish hotels and apartment blocks, congress centre and casino – are not yet entirely convincing. Much of the town is immaculate once more, but the sight of once-distinguished guesthouses falling into disrepair is still not unknown, particularly on the far (eastern) side of the Ache. Things are liveliest in winter, when the influx of skiers perks things up, as does the annual **Sonnwendfeier** (summer solstice celebration) in mid-June, when bonfires are lit on the hills above the valley to mark the summer solstice.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Buses and **trains** stop at Bahnhofplatz in the upper part of town; the centre is just downhill to the north. Turn left outside the train station and walk down the hill to reach the **tourist office**, at Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Str 1 (June to mid-July Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; mid-July to Sept Mon–Fri 8am–6pm,

Taking the cure: Badgastein

Badgastein owes its reputation as a health resort to an abundant supply of hot spring water rich in **radon**, a radioactive gas reputed to help the human body renew itself by stimulating cell growth. The medical establishment is far from united on the true efficacy of the spa water (it has been promoted as a cure for everything from diabetes to infertility over the years), although its beneficial effect on rheumatism and arthritis is incontrovertible – and, like any good bath, it's a great way to beat stress.

The easiest way to sample the waters' soothing properties is to head for the Felsentherme on Bahnhofplatz (daily 9am–9pm; ⓦ www.felsentherme.com; 3hr ticket €17.50), which has both indoor and outdoor pools fed by spa water, plus various saunas including a panorama sauna that allows you to enjoy the scenery while sweating away. Various other healing institutions offer a seemingly endless range of therapies involving the spa water – from steam baths and radon mudpacks to exposure to radon in the underground Heilstollen or Healing Galleries. Badgastein's tourist office will happily supply details.

Sat 9am–3pm, Sun 9am–noon; Oct–May Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; ⓣ06432/3393-560, ⓦwww.gastein.com/en-gastein-bad_gastein.htm), where you can book a **private room** (②–③) in either Badgastein or **Böckstein** 3km up the valley. There's an HI **youth hostel** five minutes south of the train station at Ederplatz 2 (ⓣ06434/2080, ⓦwww.hostel-badgastein.at)with doubles (②) and dorm beds from €15.50).

Many of Badgastein's **hotels** have radon-rich spa waters on the premises, as well as a range of other spa-related services – massages, saunas and so on.

Euro Youth Hotel Krone Bahnhofsplatz 8 ⓣ06434/23 30-0, ⓦwww.euro-youth-hotel.at. Huge backpacker hotel close to the station, with dorm beds plus comfortable and spacious singles and doubles. ②

Grüner Baum Kötschachtal 25 ⓣ06434/25 16-0, ⓦwww.hoteldorf.com. Luxurious small "hotel village" in an idyllic side valley 3km from town, with alpine buildings, sauna and open-air pool. ⑨

Haus Hirt An der Kaiserpromenade 14 ⓣ06434/27 97-48, ⓦwww.haus-hirt.com. A large villa that was once the favoured retreat of Thomas Mann, with indoor pool, sauna, solarium, spa waters on site. A good base for walks, too. ⑨

Landhaus Gletschermühle Gletschermühlstr 7 ⓣ06434/20 97-0, ⓦwww.gletschermuehle.at. Family-run chalet-style pension in a residential area east of the train station. Rooms have private facilities. ④

Pension Bader Pyrkerhöhenstr 17 ⓣ06434/20 31-0, ⓦwww.pension-bader.com. Small, family-run pension in the residential area east of the station. All rooms have en-suite facilities. ③

The Town

The main attraction of Badgastein is its situation, its streets zigzagging across the hillside and affording a new vista with every turn. Walking down Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse into the town from the tourist office, you pass a number of fine Jugendstil and historicist villas by Salzburg architect Alexander Zickler, including the lovely Villa Hubertus built in 1908. At the foot of the street, beyond the Casino in the former Grand Hotel de l'Europe, **Kongressplatz** provides a focus of sorts, as the site of the ugly Kongresshaus as well as a small, rather stuffy museum in **Haus Austria** across the road (open daily 10.30am–noon & 3.30–6pm; Nov to 19 December Wed 3.30–6pm; €3). The museum has a collection of nineteenth-century landscape paintings and documents the history and development of the spa, as well as information on the geology of the region. Immediately east of here the street bridges the **Gasteiner Ache**, a spectacular torrent of white water that cuts through the town. On the other side of the Ache, the main street leads northwards past two churches, the oldest and furthest of which is the fourteenth-century **Nikolaikirche**, where the roof of the short nave is supported by a single pillar. Many of the frescoes, painted in the late fifteenth century – including the image of St Nicholas on the north side of the choir – are badly faded, but look out for the vibrant *Day of Judgement* in the nave, with the dead rising from their tombs, and sinners being shepherded into hell by club-wielding demons.

Into the mountains

In summer you can scale two local peaks, which are also served by cable car. Just east of Badgastein train station, the Stubnerkogelbahn gondola (June to mid-Oct 8.30am–4pm; €18 return), ascends to the 2246-metre **Stubnerkogel**, a superb vantage point providing vistas of the three main peaks in the area, with the Grossglockner to the west, the Ankogel to the southeast and the Dachstein to the east. It's also the starting point for numerous hiking trails. On the opposite side of the valley, the Graukogelbahn (July–Sept 8.30am–4pm leaving hourly in good weather only; return €18) is a two-stage chairlift to the

Graukogelhütte, on an alpine meadow some 500m below the 2492-metre-high peak of the **Graukogel** itself. It's an evocative place from which to look out over the wilds of the Hohe Tauern.

For walkers, one of two quick routes out of Badgastein and into the mountains is along the **Kaiser-Wilhelm-Promenade**, which leaves the northeastern end of town to work its way along the hillside, offering extensive views straight down the Gastein valley en route to the Kötschachtal, a side valley shrouded by dense pine forest. Along the way you'll pass a monument to the German Kaiser Wilhelm I, first emperor of united Germany, after whom the promenade is named. After about fifteen minutes the path emerges from the trees to head through the *Grüner Baum* hotel complex before continuing onwards into increasingly desolate alpine territory, with the mountains crowding in on either side. If you're looking for a drink and a snack before heading back into town, the **Himmelwand** hut (open all year), twenty minutes beyond the Grüner Baum, or the **Prossau** hut (closed Nov), a further two hours uphill, are reasonable targets to aim for. An alternative walk involves taking the **Erzherzog-Johann-Promenade**, which leaves the Bad Hofgastein road about 100m south of the Badgastein tourist office, and leads round the wooded flanks of the Stubnerkogel, opening up a sweeping panorama of the valley, including the sight of the hotels of Badgastein spilling down the hillside over to the right. After about an hour of gentle climbing the path arrives at the **Angeralm**, a bowl surrounded by mountains, where there's a café-restaurant from where you can descend on foot or – during the winter ski and summer hiking seasons – by bus to Bad Hofgastein.

Eating and drinking

Many of the hotels offer good-quality (if not always cheap) **food**, while the town's plentiful restaurants widen your choice of venues. There's a wider and livelier choice of places to **drink** during the ski season (early Dec to mid-April), which is when Badgastein really comes alive.

Restaurants

Fischerwirt Karl-Heinz-Waggerl-Str 32. In an old wooden house at the southern end of town, with pasta and pizza alongside the traditional Austrian fare, and main courses from €8.70.

Hofkeller at *Hotel Salzburger Hof*, Karl-Heinz-Waggerl-Str 18, ⓣ06434/2037-245. Hotel restaurant specializing in fondues and *raclette*, on the pricey side, and closed in summer.

Jägerhäusl Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Str 9 ⓣ06434/2025-4. Buzzy, central place with a vast gastgarten, serving a wide range of Austrian main dishes and lunchtime snacks; schnitzel-type fare starts around €9.

Lutter & Wegner Villa Solitude, Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Str 16 ⓣ06434/51011. Classy Badgastein outpost of the renowned Berlin wine bar and restaurant, housed in a Biedermeyer-era villa and with main courses from €15.

Cafés and bars

Bellevue Alm On the hill above Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Str, about 1.6km out of town at Bellevuealmweg 6 ⓣ06434/3881. A rustic mountain-hut-style venue with accordion-driven folk music and a limited menu of Austrian nibbles. Open Thurs–Sun.

Bellini Karl-Heinz-Waggerl-Str 18. Elegant Italian/American bar/restaurant on two levels, with pictures of film stars on the walls and large windows.

Schafflinger Schialm South end of town on the Böckstein road, ⓣ06434/2055. Old-time dancing and folk music, starting (in winter) at 6pm and becoming more rowdy as the evening progresses. Reservation recommended.

Schuh Kaiser Wilhelm Promenade. Best of the places for a daytime coffee, with a tempting range of cakes, pastries and ice cream, and an outdoor terrace offering views down the valley.

Silver Bullet Bar Meyerbeerweg 1. The coolest après-ski place in town, with an English-language menu and a Canadian/Western theme. Open (winter only) from 3.30pm until 2am.

Böckstein

Four kilometres south of Badgastein, and an easy walk if you follow the Kaiserin-Elisabeth-Promenade, which starts near the Stubnerkogel gondola station, **BÖCKSTEIN** was once a mining settlement devoted to the extraction of gold from the Radhausberg to the southeast. Tucked away on the western side of the village, **Altböckstein** was founded by eighteenth-century prince-archbishop of Salzburg Sigismund von Schrattenbach as a model community for the workers, complete with tenement-like living quarters, village green, and a quaint chapel on a knoll. The buildings have been tastefully restored, and there's the small **Montan Museum** in one of the old storehouses (mid-May to mid-Oct Mon–Sat 10am–noon & 3–5.30pm; €3) displaying old mining equipment, ceremonial uniforms and a model of the **Sackzug**, the rudimentary means by which ore was transported to the valley bottom – sacks of the stuff were tied together and then sent down a wooden chute, with a miner riding on the first sack rather like the pilot of a bobsleigh.

Böckstein's numerous **private rooms** can be booked through the tourist office in Badgastein. Of the handful of **hotels**, the *Rader*, Karl-Imhof-Ring 22 (☎06434/2405, ⓦwww.hotel-rader.com; summer ❺, winter ❻), is well appointed, non-smoking and in Altböckstein. The *Restaurant Zur Post*, on the Bundesstrasse through the village, does fondue and veggie mains from around €11.

Beyond Böckstein: the Heilstollen and Sportgastein

The main road and rail routes head southeast from Böckstein towards the twelve-kilometre-long **Tauern rail tunnel**, 1km away, where road vehicles are loaded onto wagons and transported through the tunnel by train. Trains carrying private cars operate from 6.20am to 10.25pm southbound, and from 5.40am to 9.55pm northbound; a single journey costs €17. On the other side of the tunnel, the road winds a scenic descent down the **Mölltal** towards Spittal an der Drau in Carinthia (see Chapter 6).

A toll road, the Gasteiner Alpenstrasse (€4 per person) heads southwest from Böckstein up the increasingly narrow valley of the **Nassfelder Ache**, whose steep sides are washed by numerous waterfalls, towards the winter sports area of Sportgastein. One kilometre out of Böckstein, you pass the access road to the **Heilstollen**, or "Healing Galleries", 500m up the hill and hidden among the trees. Inside, an underground train ferries patients to radon-rich tunnels with high degrees of humidity in order to treat a variety of ailments, including respiratory diseases and arthritis. The shafts were dug in the 1940s in an unsuccessful attempt to find gold and silver ore; those working on the project soon began to report that the atmosphere underground had a beneficial effect on their aches and pains. Nowadays the tunnels form a full-scale medical facility working in tandem with the spa hotels in Badgastein, although it's said that you need at least ten trips down (with at least a day's rest between each one) to reap the benefits – thereby discouraging casual visits. If you're interested in trying it, a single visit costs €54.50, and includes a medical check-up followed by an hour in the tunnels (phone at least a day in advance for an appointment: ☎06434/3753-0); the humidity coupled with the exposure to radon tends to leave you exhausted. There's a **bus** approximately hourly from Badgastein train station, starting at 6.28am with a last departure from Badgastein at 3pm; the last bus back is at 6.43pm.

Five kilometres beyond the Heilstollen and reached through steep, unlit road tunnels, **SPORTGASTEIN**, on the borders of the Hohe Tauern National Park, is a buzzing ski area in winter; in summer, it's little more than a car park,

The Hohe Tauern Nationalpark

Established in 1971, the **Hohe Tauern Nationalpark** (Ⓦwww.hohetauern.at) was mapped out to protect the natural environment around the Hohe Tauern's highest peaks and to keep the building development below at bay. It embraces 1786 square kilometres and straddles the borders of the Salzburger Land, Carinthia and the Tyrol. Austria's highest mountain, the Grossglockner (see p.418) is within the park, as are the spectacular Krimmler Wasserfälle (see p.418). The Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse forges a path straight through the area, but otherwise you're only likely to come across the park if you're out walking in the hills above the towns on its fringes – you'll usually encounter a small sign telling you that you're entering the park, accompanied by a short list of dos and don'ts, the most important of which are to stick to marked paths and take all your litter out with you. Among the wildlife encountered within the park are the elusive *Gemse* (chamois) and the ubiquitous *Murmeltier* (marmot). You're not supposed to feed these cute-looking beasts, although tourists invariably do. There are a few *Hütte* within the park boundaries catering for long-distance hikers.

Tourist offices in centres bordering the park usually have a stock of leaflets detailing hiking routes, flora and fauna, and there's an impressive new visitor centre at Mittersill, west of Zell am See (see p.412).

▲ Hohe Tauern ibex

though facing a breathtaking amphitheatre of ravine-scarred mountains. Numerous enticing hiking trails radiate outwards from here, and there are a few *Hütte* which open their doors in summer to offer refreshments, including the **Nassfeld Alm** twenty minutes' walk south of the car park.

Zell am See and around

ZELL AM SEE is the quintessential Austrian resort, a compact town of picture-postcard perfection, with a lake on one side and an impressive mountain hinterland on the other. A skiing and hiking centre in its own right, Zell is also within easy striking distance of the Glemmtal resorts of **Saalbach** and **Hinterglemm** to the northwest, while the village of **Kaprun** to the south provides access to year-round glacier skiing below the **Kitzsteinhorn**. Other classic alpine excursions within reach are the two mountain reservoirs in the shadow of the Kitzsteinhorn, trips

along the **Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse**, which crosses the Hohe Tauern mountains to the south, and the magnificent **Krimmler waterfalls** to the west. Two folk traditions with which Zell is associated are the **Krampuslaufen** on December 5, when folk wearing demonic masks take to the streets, and the **Hogmoar** wrestling competition, a 500-year-old trial of strength for local shepherds that takes place in late July near the summit of the 2117-metre Hundstein, which rises above the lake to the east.

Arrival, information and accommodation

From the **train station**, at the southern end of Zell's pedestrian zone, it's a five-minute walk northeast to the **tourist office**, at Brucker Bundesstr 1a (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 10am–noon; ⓣ06542/770-0, ⓦwww.europasportregion.info), which is roughly opposite the **bus station**. The tourist office will help book **private rooms** in Zell itself or the nearby villages of Schüttdorf and Thumersbach. If the office is closed, there's an accommodation information board with courtesy phones outside. Schüttdorf holds the nearest **youth hostel**, the HI *Haus der Jugend*, at Seespitzstr 13 (ⓣ06542/57185, ⓦwww.hostel-zell.at; to get there from the station, walk southwards along the lakeside path), which has dorm beds and some doubles (2). Best of the **campsites** is *Seecamp*, 3km out of town at Thumersbacherstr 34, on the northern shore of the lake (ⓣ06542/72115, ⓦwww.seecamp.at).

Hotels and pensions

Alpenrose Schmittenstr 22 ⓣ06542/72570, ⓦwww.pension-alpenrose.at. Largish pension just uphill from the centre offering en-suite rooms with TV, a decent breakfast buffet and a garden with children's play area. 4

Grand Esplanade 4 ⓣ06542/788, ⓦwww.grandhotel-zellamsee.at. A stately nineteenth-century hotel whose ornate balconies and shuttered windows have French Riviera pretensions, with its own private stretch of lakefront as well as an indoor pool. 9

Herzog Saalfeldnerstr 20 ⓣ06542/72503, ⓦwww.pensionherzog.at. One of the cheapest pensions near the lake. More expensive rooms have en-suite facilities, some have balconies. 2

Hubertus Gartenstr 4 ⓣ06542/72427, ⓦwww.hubertus-pension.at. Award-winning eco hotel with friendly young owners, organic breakfasts, anti-allergy bedding and a quiet but convenient location close to the City Xpress cable car station. Summer 4, winter 5

Lebzelter Dreifaltigkeitsgasse 7 ⓣ06542/7760, ⓦwww.hotel-lebzelter.at. Traditional, friendly town-centre hotel with spacious rooms with en-suite bath or shower and TV. Summer 5, winter 9

Hotel-Pension Schmittental Schmittenstr 60 ⓣ06542/72332, ⓦwww.schmittental.at. Traditional alpine-style building 1km west of the town centre on the way to the Schmittenhöhebahn. There's a big garden, and all rooms have en-suite facilities and TV. Summer 3, winter (half board) 7

Steinerwirt 1493 Dreifaltigkeitsgasse 2 ⓣ06542/72502, ⓦwww.steinerwirt.com. Old-established *wirtshaus* given a wonderfully funky makeover, with aromatic, untreated Swiss pine in the rooms. changing exhibitions of modern art and a roof terrace with views over the town and lake. Summer 7, winter 8

The town and the mountains

The obvious focus of Zell am See is the **lake** itself, with a pleasant ten-kilometre promenade and cycle path you can follow all the way round, although it's occasionally forced inland by private plots of land. It's a scenic place for a stroll at any season, with the friendly-looking, relatively low Dientener Berge looming over the lake to the east, and the altogether more inhospitable peaks of the Tauern mountains forming a grey-white barrier to the south. From June to September you can swim in the lake from the *Strandbäder* of Zell am See, Schüttdorf or Thumersbach. Rowing boats can be hired along the Esplanade and in Schüttdorf, where there's also a windsurf centre; there's a sailing school

at Prielau, at the northern end of the lake. At the height of winter the lake often freezes over, becoming a vast outdoor playground for skating or playing *Eisstockschiessen*, the Austrian version of curling.

Just inland from the lakefront in Zell's compact pedestrianized centre, the first thing you notice about the **Pfarrkirche** is the impressively sturdy tower, although its main claim to fame is the late-Gothic organ loft inside, supported by slender pillars chiselled into spiral shapes, and a delicately carved balustrade sporting floral designs. A few steps to the east, the town's only other real historical sight is the **Vogturm**, a medieval tower that now houses the **Heimatmuseum** (mid-May to mid-Oct & Dec 20 to Easter; Mon–Fri 1.30–5.30pm; €2.20), a cramped collection of stuffed animals, minerals, archaic skis and other local oddities – including the devilish, horned *Krampus* masks still made by local craftsmen and worn on the night of December 5 (the eve of St Nicholas' Day), when people run through Zell's streets in the guise of demons. The *Krampus* is a shadowy counterpoint to St Nicholas, tormenting children who have behaved badly and will therefore not receive any Christmas gifts. A little to the south, the swanky **Ferry Porsche Congress Center** dominates Bahnhofstrasse and acts as a venue for concerts and events as well as hosting dull business conventions.

A horseshoe of mountains immediately west of town is served by three main lift systems, catering for hikers and sightseers in summer, and skiers in winter, when they're augmented by a network of smaller chairlifts and drag lifts to form a sizeable integrated winter sports area. Nearest at hand is the **City Xpress** (daily: May 10–12 & 22–25 & June to mid-Sept 9am–5pm; Dec–March 8.30am–4.30/5pm; return €12.80) two minutes' walk uphill from the town centre, which involves a two-stage (gondola followed by chairlift) ascent of the Hirschkogel, a peak that can also be approached via the Areitbahn gondola (mid-June to mid-Sept & Dec to early April 8.30am–4.30/5pm; €12.80) from **Schüttdorf**, 3km south of Zell. Twenty-five minutes' walk further west of the City Xpress (and served by a half-hourly bus), the **Schmittenhöhebahn** gondola (daily: mid-May to mid-June 9am–5pm, mid-June to mid-Oct 8.30am–5pm & end Nov to mid-April 8.30am–4.30/5pm; return €20) involves a ten-minute ride to the highland pastures of the 1965-metre Schmittenhöhe, where you'll find a café-restaurant and an impressive, all-encompassing panorama, with the lake down to the east and the ridge of the Hohe Tauern to the south.

▲ Zell am See

Year-round activities in Zell am See

The **winter** sports region served by Zell am See and Kaprun (ⓦwww.europasportregion.info) offers a wealth of opportunities for skiers of all abilities: the Kitzsteinhorn glacier above Kaprun (ⓦwww.kitzsteinhorn.at) is predominantly an area for beginners and intermediates, while the Schmittenhöhe and its mountain neighbours above Zell (ⓦwww.schmitten.at) have plenty of pistes to keep novices happy, alongside some longish black runs for the advanced skier. There's a snowboard park in Zell and a half-pipe on the Kitzsteinhorn, and the presence of snowboarders making use of the snowfields of the Kitzsteinhorn in the summer months helps to keep Zell's nightlife buzzing year-round. The season on the Schmittenhöhe runs from early December to mid-April, while the Kitzsteinhorn is skiable for all but the hottest summer months. A one-day ski pass for either Zell am See or the Kitzsteinhorn in the winter high season costs €38.50, while the *Europa Sportregion* pass covering both places costs €73 for 2 days, €184 for 6 days and €306 for 13 days. One-day summer skipasses for the Kitzsteinhorn cost €28.50.

The range of **summer** activities on offer is augmented by windsurfing and sailing on the lake, and whitewater rafting in the Taxenbach Gorge, 20km to the east of town. Numerous local tour operators arrange trips to Taxenbach (enquire at the Zell am See tourist office for details); expect to pay around €40-45 (including transfer to the gorge and a 15km trip in a six- or eight-person dinghy).

The **Sonnenalmbahn** (daily: mid-June to mid-Sept 9am–5pm, & Dec–March 8.30am–4.30/5pm; return €11), which departs right next to the Schmittenhöhebahn, climbs in the opposite direction towards the alpine meadows of the Sonnalm, before connecting with a chairlift (return €11) which rises to the 1850m Sonnkogel, from where you can gaze down on the Glemmtal to the north. Whichever way up you choose, you'll be greeted by wide-ranging views and an appetizing variety of walks – taking the gondola to the Schmittenhöhe and following the Höhenpromenade path northwards to the top station of the Sonnkogel chairlift (90min) is one of the more popular itineraries, as much in winter as in summer.

Eating and drinking

Cafés and restaurants crowd Zell's central pedestrian zone, offering pizza or inexpensive traditional staples such as *Pinzgauer Käsnockn* (gnocchi-like noodles covered in cheese) and *Röstl* (potato pieces, onion and meat fried in a pan) alongside the usual schnitzels and steaks. Fresh lake fish also features on many menus. Given the town's popularity as a winter resort, there's lively **nightlife** on offer, much of which stays open for the bulk of the year. *Café Vanini*, a two-storey wooden pavilion on Bahnhofstrasse, is the best place to relax over coffee, cakes, and ice cream.

Restaurants

Bellevue am See Seeuferstr 41, Thumersbach ⓣ06542/731040. Pricey restaurant on the eastern side of the lake, with a ferry connection from Zell am See and locally caught fish on the menu. Reservations recommended.

Einkehr Schmittenstr 12 ⓣ06542/72363. Big, beamed après-ski place serving Italian and Austrian fare, including a sizeable selection of local, organic dishes. Closed Wed.

Kupferkessel Bruckner Bundesstr 18 ⓣ06542/72768. Big, brash place uphill from the train station with reasonably priced pizzas, decent salad bar and late opening hours. Menu also offers a sizeable – if pricey – selection of steaks.

Metzgerwirt Sebastian-Hörl-Gasse 5 ⓣ06542/72520. One of the best places to sample traditional Austrian and local Pinzgau food in comfortable surroundings. On the smart side, but

Käsnockn and *Gröstl* rarely cost over €10; the other main courses start at around €12.

Steinerwirt Dreifaltigkeitsgasse 2 ⓣ06542/72502. A 500-year-old Gasthof offering the standard Austrian repertoire at affordable prices, sometimes with zither music as an accompaniment in the attractive courtyard garden.

Bars

B17 Hangar Salzmannstr 2. Corrugated tin hut which conceals a cocktail bar crammed with US air force memorabilia, with a soundtrack of blues, soul and rock'n'roll. Just south of the *Grand* hotel.

Conditorei Café Mosshammer Stadtplatz 4. Large café in classic Austrian style, a prime spot for people watching.

Insider Kirchengasse. Spacious café-bar in the centre of town with a good range of wines and cocktails. Plenty of outdoor seating in summer. The Viva disco next door is open from 10pm.

Lebzelt Felsenkeller Dreigfaltigkeitsgasse. Rustic, low-ceilinged cellar bar beneath the *Lebzelter* hotel, open during the winter season only.

Pinzgauer Diele, Kirchengasse 4. Sizeable bar with faux-rustic interior and Mexican or Italian food. Turns into a disco after about 10pm; a good-fun winter drinking-and-dancing venue when it gets going. Open until 4am.

Villa Crazy Daisy Salzmannstr 8. Big, central bar and restaurant with regular live bands, a wide terrace in summer and a full-on après ski atmosphere in winter. Open until 4am.

Kaprun and the Kitzsteinhorn

Sprawling across the plain where the Kapruner Ache joins the Salzach, **KAPRUN**, 5km southwest of Zell, is a modern resort village serving the ski slopes of the **Maiskogel** and the **Kitzsteinhorn** to the south. It's an inoffensive if soulless place outside the winter season, and anyone thinking of visiting the Kitzsteinhorn in summer (for the glacier skiing or views) would probably do better to base themselves in Zell am See. There's a **tourist office** on Salzburger Platz (same hours as Zell am See office; ⓣ06547/8080) organizing **private room** rental (②–③). At the south end of the village at Nikolaus-Gassner-Str 448, an HI **youth hostel** (ⓣ06547/8507) offers dorm beds (€19.50), and there's a **campsite,** *Zur Mühle* (ⓣ06547/8254), beside the Kapruner Ache, which flows along the western side of the village. Kaprun is only small and places to **eat and drink** are central and fairly easy to find: *Dorfstadl,* Kellnerfeldstr 691, serves good Austrian and regional food in an old, rustic stable, while *Hilberger's Beisl,* Wilhelm-Fazokas-Str 149 is a pub-like place with substantial snacks and good main meals. *Baum Bar,* a disco/bar and pizzeria on the northern edge of the village, is one of the better choices for a drink.

Buses from Zell am See pass through Kaprun and then climb northwards for 5km to the stations of the **Gletscherjet and Panoramabahn cable cars**, which serve the year-round skiing slopes below the **Kitzsteinhorn**. This 3203-metre mountain is the northernmost outpost of the **Glocknergruppe**, a cluster of high-altitude peaks that culminate with the 3798m Grossglockner (Austria's highest) 10km due south.

The **Gletscherjet** and **Panoramabahn** (8am–4.30pm; return €21.90) ascend to the Häuslalm at the bottom of the ski area, from where the second stage of the Gletscherjet and a chairlift take over to the *Alpincenter* café-restaurant. The final stage is undertaken by cable car, ascending to the 3029m Gipfelstation just beneath the Horn's conical summit. There's an extensive panorama of neighbouring mountains, with the Hohe Tauern's second highest peak, the 3674-metre Grossvenediger, to the west, and (in clear conditions) unparalleled views northwest across the ridge of the Kitzbühler Alpen towards the Kaisergebirge 50km distant. Even in midsummer the summit can be icy underfoot and extremely cold – so take appropriate clothing.

The road continues beyond the Gletscherbahn stations towards the **Kaprun Hochgebirgsstauseen –** two alpine reservoirs, the **Wasserfallboden** and the **Mooserboden**, sheltering on the Kitzsteinhorn's eastern flanks amid landscapes

The Gletscherbahn disaster of 2000

The **funicular railway** which ascended the lower slopes of the Kitzsteinhorn through a steep 4km tunnel was the local tourist industry's pride and joy until November 11, 2000, when it caught fire as it entered the tunnel, apparently as a result of oil dripping from a hydraulic system onto a heater which – designed as it was for purely domestic use – should never have been installed in a train in the first place. Power and light rapidly failed, and the intense fire and poisonous smoke which swiftly followed killed 150 passengers, most of them on their way up the mountain to attend a snowboard festival, along with a passenger and driver in the descending train and three others in the station at the top. Tragically, most passengers who managed to get out of the train opted to head up instead of back down to the tunnel entrance, and were therefore overcome by smoke as the steeply-inclined tunnel became, in effect, a gigantic chimney; there were only twelve survivors from the rear of the train. It was the worst fire disaster in Austria since World War II. Subsequent court cases in Austria and Germany failed to pin the blame for the fire onto either the Gletscherbahn operator or the heater's manufacturer, the latter pointing out that they had never sanctioned its use in such a location. Such was the psychological trauma, it was decided the railway would never reopen for passenger traffic, though the infrastructure remains in place. At the back of the car park behind the cable car station, a simple but moving Gedenkstätte has been erected, with one coloured glass window for each of the fire's young victims.

of eerily desolate beauty. The journey can only be made by public transport (June to mid-Oct 8.10am–4.45pm; €17): the car park at the **Kesselfall Alpenhaus**, 2km above the Gletscherbahn station, is the end of the line for cars. From here, a bus takes you to the **Lärchwand**, where an open-topped funicular climbs from the valley floor to be met by a second bus, which dives through tunnels on the western side of the Wasserfallboden before reaching the **dam** at the northern end of the Mooserboden. Here you'll find a restaurant, trails leading off into the wilderness, and a chance to gaze at snow-clad peaks that crowd in on all sides. Weather permitting, you should be able to pick out the ridge of the Salzburger Kalkalpen, 40km to the northeast.

Saalbach and Hinterglemm

Hourly buses from Zell am See head up the **Glemmtal** to the north, where the villages of **SAALBACH** and **HINTERGLEMM** entertain winter-package tourists from the Netherlands, Germany and Britain. Skiing is good for beginners and intermediates throughout the valley, and both villages have plenty of bars and pubs catering to a wide range of tastes, although Saalbach is the livelier of the two. A **tourist office** (Ⓣ06541/680068, Ⓦwww.saalbach.com) on the main road through Saalbach will help you find **private rooms** and **hotels**; the size of some of Saalbach's vast "chalet" hotels has to be seen to be believed. The 1794-metre **Kohlmaiskopf** on the mountain ridge north of Saalbach can be reached by gondola, as can the 2020m Schattberg Ost to the south; further up the valley to the west the Westgipfelbahn ascends the Schattberg West from Hinterglemm, and there's a cable car to the 1984-metre **Zwölferkogel**. Outside the ski season, things are all rather more sedate.

The Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse

A deservedly popular excursion from Zell am See, the **Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse** is one of the most spectacular routes across the Alps,

running north–south between Ferleiten and Heiligenblut over a high mountain pass just east of the **Grossglockner**, Austria's highest peak. A toll road for most of its length (cars €28, motorbikes €18; bus passengers pay a small toll as a proportion of their ticket price), the route is usually open from May to the end of October – precise dates depend on weather conditions. **A bus** makes the trip to the **Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe**, main vantage point for sightseers, just once a day from Zell am See, connecting with an onward bus to Heiligenblut to the south; from Heiligenblut, up to five buses a day make the ascent in high summer. The return bus to Zell leaves at 3pm.

Leaving the Salzach Valley at **PICHL**, 5km southeast of Zell am See, the initial stages of the route are leisurely, as the road heads up the verdant **Fuschertal**. A **Wildpark** (May–Nov daily 8am–dusk; €5.50) at **FERLEITEN**, 14km up the valley, specializes in the chamois, deer and mouflon indigenous to the area. Tollgates here mark the start of the Hochalpenstrasse proper, which rises via a succession of steep hairpins to the **Fuschertörl**, a popular viewing point, and the start of a two-kilometre sideroad to the **Edelweissspitze**, offering panoramic views and especially popular with bikers.

After negotiating the pass's 2504-metre summit at the **Hochtor** tunnel, the road descends for a few kilometres to a junction where a popular side-trip – the **Gletscherstrasse** – forks right towards the **Franz-Josefs-Höhe** (the emperor made a much-publicized alpine excursion here in 1856, hence the name), a lookout point facing the 3798-metre Grossglockner itself. It's an odd juxtaposition of alpine wilderness and tourist development, with a multistorey car park, **restaurants** and a **visitor centre** overlooking the crevasse-riven **Pasterze Glacier.** Somehow, the sheer desolate beauty of the place soon makes you forget the hundreds of other tourists milling around. The landscape around the Franz-Josefs-Höhe is too high up and too wild for it to be a hiking venue for the inexperienced, although you can take a few steps out on the ice if you have footwear with a solid grip. The Gletscherbahn funicular will take you down to the glacier surface (€8.20 return), although you can make your own descent (via the admittedly rather slippery) footpath in 20–30 minutes.

Along the Salzachtal to the Krimmler Falls

Fifty kilometres west of Zell am See, situated at the head of the **Salzachtal** in the fertile, cow-strewn **Pinzgau**, the **Krimmler Wasserfälle** are justifiably one of the biggest attractions in this part of Austria. The sight of the Krimmler Ache cascading down from the Hohe Tauern, sending up clouds of spray, which hang suspended above the bottle-green pine forests, makes for a memorable experience. Hourly **buses** connect Zell am See to the falls.

Between Zell and Krimml, the Salzachtal harbours a succession of villages offering access to scenic alpine side-trips for those who have their own transport. Sixteen kilometres out of Zell, **UTTENDORF** stands at the northern end of an attractive route up the tranquil **Stubachtal**, at the head of which a two-stage cable car (June–Sept 9.30am–5pm, mid-Dec to late April 9am–4.15pm; return €19) ascends at **Enzingerboden** to **Weiss See**, a high-altitude lake in the shadow of the 3086-metre **Granatspitze** offering good hiking possibilities and with 21km of affordable family skiing in winter. Ten kilometres further along the Salzachtal, **MITTERSILL**, the main tourist centre of the Pinzgau, provides access to the **Thurn Pass**, a panoramic road that heads north over the mountains to Kitzbühel (see p.507). On the western edge of the village, the timber-clad building housing **Nationalpark Welten** (daily 9am–6pm; €8) opened in 2007 to provide a lively introduction to the Hohe Tauern National Park's flora, fauna,

geology and climate. Visitors approach the ultra-modern structure up a ramp flanked by windows fashioned from Swarovski crystals. Once inside, kids can scramble through a reconstruction of a marmot burrow, there's a stunning 360° film of an avalanche and a jewel-like wall display of minerals found in the region. Further short films explain the geological origin of the Alps and the survival strategies of the park's animals throughout the year.

A little further west, the sleek **Panoramabahn Kitzbüheler Alpen** (June to mid-Oct daily 8.45am–4.30pm; €15.50 return; Dec to early April 8.45am–4.15pm, one day ski pass €38.50) connects the village of Hollersbach with a network of lifts that extends all the way to Kitzbühel to the north. In summer you can take mountain bikes up in the spacious cable cars, while hikers can take a two-hour walk past the high altitude Resterkogelsee to the Panoramaalm and back, with wonderful views of the Hohe Tauern peaks to the south. More experienced walkers can continue over the 2004m Zweitausender down to the village of Jochberg, from where a bus makes the return journey over the Thurn Pass to Mittersill. Winter visitors can reach the pistes without removing their skis. The interlinked lift network gives access to 145km of skiing for all abilities; there's plenty for intermediate skiers and beginners on the 1984m Resterhöhe above Hollersbach, while experienced skiers will find more challenging pistes across the Land border in Tyrol. Roughly halfway between Mittersill and Krimml, the small ski resort of **NEUKIRCHEN** offers a gondola trip (mid-May to mid-Oct daily 9.30am–3.30pm; €13 return; Dec to early April 9am–4.30pm, day's ski pass €33) up the slopes of the **Wildkogel** on the northern side of the valley, and several hiking routes run up the deep, ravine-like side-valleys, such as the Untersulzbach and Obersulzbach, which lead south towards the foot of the 3674-metre **Grossvenediger**, the Hohe Tauern's second highest peak. The skiing here is largely easy or intermediate.

Buses from Zell am See arrive at **KRIMML** at a car park a short distance from the falls' **ticket booth**; if you're coming by car or motorbike, ignore the

A hut-to-hut tour of the Grossglockner

While tens of thousands of tourists "do" the **Grossglockner** each year by car or bus, the most rewarding way to approach Austria's highest mountain is on foot. The national park authority and the Austrian Alpenverein have devised a seven-day route around the mountain, which crosses no glaciers nor involves climbing any rockfaces with rope. Nevertheless, correct equipment is essential, as is keeping informed of the weather forecasts. Inexperienced mountain walkers are advised to engage the services of a guide, and crampons are necessary, especially in early summer, to cross the hard packed remnants of winter snow lingering in the steep gullies that are crossed by the route. Beginning at Kaprun, a week's hut-to-hut tour follows a spectacular route that wanders via Kals am Grossglockner, which has bus links with Lienz and other East Tyrol destinations. The walk demands a good level of fitness as a single day's walk may require ascents of up to 1700m, with much of the route well over 2000m in altitude. At the end of each day's walk there are village inns or basic alpine huts in which to stay the night. You can book **accommodation** for the route through the Hohe Tauern National Park Vacation Region in Mittersill (☎06562/40939; ⓦwww.nationalpark.at).

Though several trails cross the southern flanks of Grossglockner and link an assortment of huts, only those with experience of glacier-crossing and with the necessary equipment should attempt to make a full circle round the peak itself.

A detailed **description** of the route in English, Mountain Walking – Glockner Runde is available free from local tourist offices. A recommended **map** is Freytag & Berndt's Wanderkarte 122 (Grossglockner, Kaprun, Zell am See; 1:50,000), covering the whole of the above area. The telephone number for mountain **emergencies** is 140.

blandishments of the various private car parks on the approach road until you've first crossed the bridge and checked whether there are free spaces available in the main car park behind WasserWunderWelt.

From here, a leisurely pedestrian route meanders past stalls selling snacks, drinks and kitschy souvenirs to the ticket booth. This is the start of a four kilometre uphill trail (mid-April to Oct 8am–6pm; €1.80; Nov–April free, but only open as far as the lowest fall in winter) passing three main sections of **waterfall** (which, starting with the lowest one, drop a distance of 140m, 100m and 140m respectively). The coach parties thin out the higher you go, but it's worth persevering (if you can) as far as the **Krimmlertal**, the starkly beautiful alpine valley from which the waters originate. The path is steep; the full ascent should take about an hour and a half. Even if time is short, you should at least venture partway up for a closer look at the lower falls. If you're unsure of your fitness or simply don't fancy the arduous ascent, local taxis will take you to the upper reaches of the falls, from which you can make the descent under your own steam: telephone numbers are posted up at the main car park – expect to pay €11 to get to the top. If you've still not had your fill of water, you can afterwards visit the **WasserWunderWelt** exhibition (May–Oct daily 9.30am–5pm; ⓦwww.wawuwe.at; €6, or €7 combi ticket with falls) back at the foot of the falls.

There are numerous *Gasthöfe* offering **food** and **accommodation** scattered between the falls and the village proper, and a small **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2.30–5pm, June–Sept also Sat 8.30–10.30am, Dec–Easter also Sat 8.30–10.30am & 4.30-6pm; ⓣ06564/72390, ⓦwww.krimml.at) in the village centre, which has details of **rooms** in local farmhouses, should you decide to linger. Krimml's winter **skiing** forms part of the Zillertal Arena region centred on Zell am Ziller (see p.496).

West of Krimml, the main road begins to climb towards the **Gerlos Pass** (a toll road: €7 per car, €4 per motorbike), before descending into the Tyrol and the Zillertal (see p.494). You only pay the toll if you're going across into Tyrol; if all you want to do is enjoy high-altitude views across to the falls, there are several places you can stop free of charge on the ascent.

Travel details

Flights (ⓦwww.salzburg-airport.com)

Salzburg to: Vienna (3–4 daily; 1 hr 5min).

Trains (ⓦwww.oebb.at)

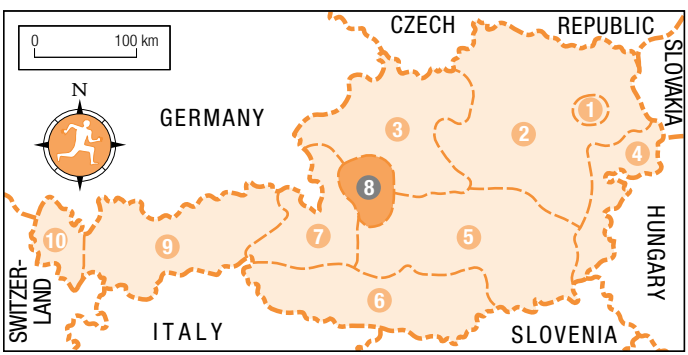
Hallein to: Salzburg (half hourly; 25min).
Salzburg to: Attnang-Puchheim (1–2hr; 45min–1hr 10min); Bad Hofgastein (8 daily; 1hr 24min); Badgastein (8 daily; 1hr 36min); Graz (5 daily; 4hr 10min); Hallein (half hourly; 15–27min); Innsbruck (11 daily; 2hr); Klagenfurt (every 2hr; 3hr 16min); Linz (hourly; 1hr 18min); St Johann (half hourly; 56min–1hr 11min); Schwarzach-St Veit (half hourly; 1hr 3min–1hr 18min); Vienna (every 2–3hr; 2hr 35min–3hr 20min); Villach (every 2hr; 2hr 43min); Werfen (half hourly; 40–54min); Zell am See (every 1–2hr; 1hr 38min–1hr 54min).
Zell am See to: Mittersill (hourly; 1hr 7min).

Buses

Badgastein to: Bad Hofgastein (half hourly; 15min); Böckstein (every 1–2hr; 8min); Heilstollen (1 daily; 14min).
Böckstein to: Heilstollen (hourly; 3min); Sportgastein (hourly; 15min)
Hallein to: Bad Dürrnberg (hourly; 6min); Salzburg (every 1–2hr; 31–37min).
Salzburg to: Grossgmain (hourly; 30min); Hallein (hourly; 28min).
Zell am See to: Franz–Josefs-Höhe (1 daily; 2hr 15min); Hinterglemm (hourly; 39min); Kaprun (every 1–2hr, 17min); Krimml (hourly; 1hr 16min); Mittersill (hourly; 41min); Saalbach (hourly; 32min).

8

The Salzkammergut



CHAPTER 8

Highlights

- **Lake steamers** In summer, most of the lakes offer excursions by boat, and there's no more relaxing a way to sit back and enjoy the scenery. See p.426
- **Schafbergbahn** Take a nostalgic ride up St Wolfgang's mountain for some of the most stunning views in the Salzkammergut. See p.431
- **Bad Ischl** Franz Josef's favourite resort is suffused with the atmosphere of empire and operetta. See p.436
- **Hallstaat** There are many beautiful lakeside villages in the region, but none is quite as perfect as Hallstaat, especially when approached across the water. See p.449
- **Salt mines** Underwater lakes, chapels carved out of the rock salt, or buried Nazi loot – the ancient salt mines at Hallstaat and Altaussee are an adventure underground for kids and adults alike. See p.451 & p.457
- **Dachstein ice caves** Dramatically lit ice formations and the mysterious midnight cathedral await visitors to these highly popular show caves. See p.452

▲ Hallstaat

8

The Salzkammergut

The **Salzkammergut** (Ⓦwww.salzkammergut.at) is Austria's most spectacular lake district. Its peaks may not be as lofty as those further west, but they have the advantage of hovering above glacier-carved, lake-filled troughs, forming a landscape of unique and celebrated beauty. The Salzkammergut offers relatively easy hiking and mountain biking, while the crystal clear lakes are the focus for water-based activities from yachting and windsurfing to sunbathing and swimming. Not a *Land* in its own right, the Salzkammergut is shared by Styria, the Salzburger Land and Upper Austria (by far the largest portion), though the tourist authority transcends the borders of the *Länder*.

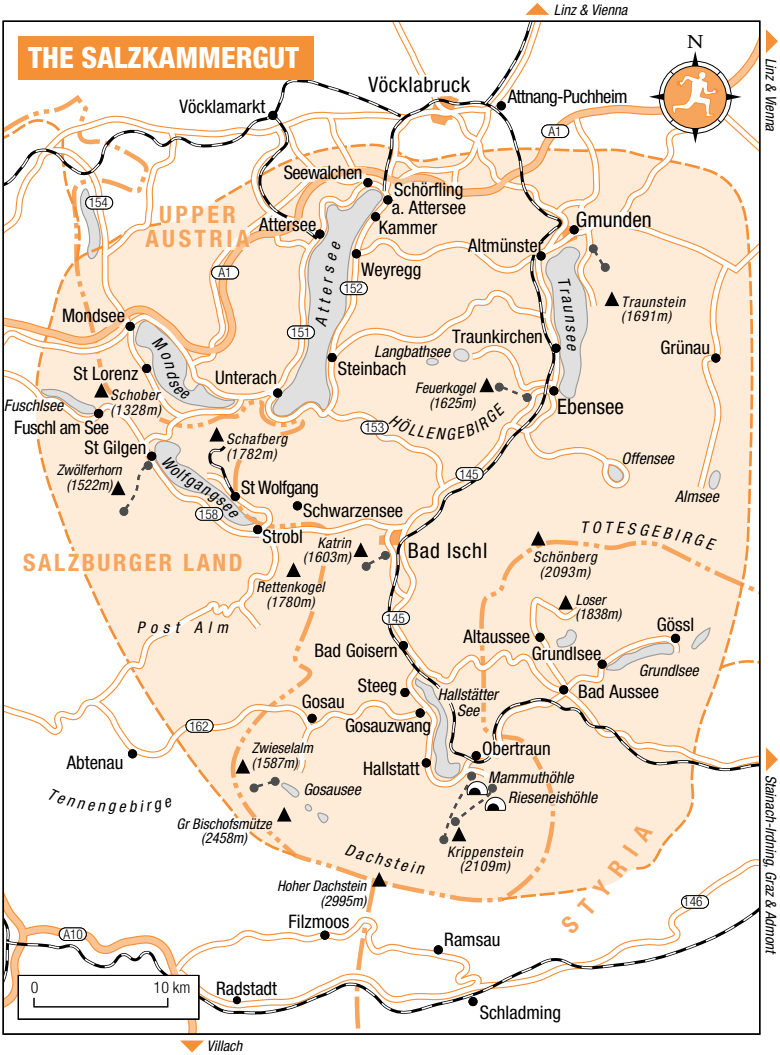
The most accessible and smallest of the major lakes is **Fuschlsee**, a thirty-minute bus ride from Salzburg and a perfect précis of what the region has to offer. The real scenic fireworks begin just to the east on **Wolfgangsee** and **Mondsee**. Watersports are popular on both, though there's plenty of historical interest too, with the pilgrimage church of **St Wolfgang**, and the abbey church in the town of **Mondsee**. The largest lake, **Attersee**, has associations with Klimt and Mahler, while **Traunsee** has a couple of fine churches along its shores. The most spectacular lake is **Hallstättersee**, whose tree-studded sides drop steeply into the water, denying direct sunlight to the prettiest of all Salzkammergut villages, **Hallstaat**, whose archeological finds are second to none.

Commercial and transport hub of the area is the spa town of **Bad Ischl**, whose tourist sights and proximity to the lakes mean you'll probably stop by at some stage. Approaching from Linz or Vienna you're likely to pass through the handsome lakeside resort of **Gmunden**, on Traunsee, the region's only other town of any real size. From Graz and the east the approach is through **Bad Aussee**, another spa whose unassuming charm provides a good introduction to Salzkammergut life.

The region's obvious gateway is Salzburg, whence regular **buses** run to Fuschlsee, Mondsee, Wolfgangsee and Bad Ischl – from the latter, you can catch buses to most of the places not served directly from Salzburg. A **rail** line runs north–south through the region linking Traunsee, Bad Ischl, Hallstättersee and Bad Aussee on the way. To get on it, change at Attnang–Puchheim on the Vienna–Salzburg line or Stainach–Irdning on the Graz–Salzburg line.

Some history

The **salt** from which the area derives its name has been mined since at least 800 BC, when Hallstaat emerged as an important focus of **Iron Age culture**. Early miners hacked pure salt from galleries dug deep into the mountains, but the salt was later slowly dissolved in water pumped into the galleries, and the resulting



brine channelled down to the valleys where it was evaporated in saltpans. Mercantile centres like Ischl, Gmunden, Ebensee and Aussee grew rich on the trade, giving the Habsburgs and the archbishops of Salzburg occasion to squabble over control of the profits. By the late fifteenth century the Salzburgers enjoyed hegemony over the area around St Wolfgang (and the western half of the Wolfgangsee still forms part of the Salzburger Land), while the rest of the modern Salzkammergut was made an imperial domain under Emperor Maximilian I. It was around this time that the name Salzkammergut was coined to describe this imperial territory's new-found status. The area was strictly controlled by the Habsburg court: only people born in the region or involved in the salt trade were allowed to live there, and the purchase or sale of salt was

The Salzkammergut Card

If you're planning to stay in the Salzkammergut for more than a day or two, it's worth buying a **Salzkammergut Card**, which gives you up to thirty percent off the entrance charges to most of the region's attractions. The card covers pretty much everything from the salt mines and local museums to tickets for lake ferries and cable cars. It costs €4.90, is valid from May until October, and can be bought from any of the region's tourist offices. To find out more, pick up a brochure, listing all the sights covered by the card or visit the regional website ⓦ www.salzkammergut.at.

limited to those with a licence. The miners themselves enjoyed some benefits, such as special woodcutting rights and exemption from military service.

Tourism began to challenge salt as the region's main source of income early in the nineteenth century when the soothing properties of the saline waters were identified, turning places like Ischl and Aussee into high-society **spa resorts** – and earning them the prefix "Bad" as a result. Franz-Josef's mother, the Archduchess Sophie, was an early enthusiast, and the emperor himself spent his summers pursuing game (two- and four-legged) in the countryside around Bad Ischl. However, it is the lakes that proved to be the major draw: Wagner, Mahler, Klimt and Brahms were among those who came here to lose themselves in an inspirational landscape, thus popularizing the area among a burgeoning middle class eager for outdoor recreation. Nowadays the Salzkammergut is one of Austria's busiest spots, attracting long-stay foreign visitors with its dazzling lakes-and-mountains scenery and serving as a weekend playground for city folk from Salzburg, Linz and beyond.

Fuschlsee

Backed by a perfectly triangular mountain, the 1328m Schober, **FUSCHLSEE** offers a taste of the Salzkammergut's scenic charms in potted form, close enough to Salzburg to make an easy half day's excursion. **Schloss Fuschl** guards the lake's western approaches. Built in 1461 to the orders of Prince-Archbishop Sigmund I of Gleink-Volkenstorf, it passed to the Austrian state in 1816 after the dissolution of the prince-bishopric of Salzburg and thereafter fell into disrepair. By the 1930s it was in private hands, the home of Gustav Edler von Remiz and his wife Hedwig, a member of the German Thyssen dynasty. As a supporter of the clerico-fascist, Vaterländische Front von Remiz fell foul of the Nazis after the Anschluss and was imprisoned in Dachau, where he died. His property was confiscated and for the next few years Schloss Fuschl was the summer residence of Nazi foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and the setting for diplomatic receptions for Germany's Axis allies. It took until 1955 before the von Remiz family regained ownership. That same year it earned undying fame in the German-speaking world as a location for the hugely successful *Sissi* films based on the life of the empress Elisabeth and starring a young Romy Schneider. The castle remains a VIP haunt; nowadays it's a luxury hotel, with a series of idyllic lakeside cabins for rent at exorbitant rates and a collection of old master paintings to amuse pampered guests. For non-residents, the Schloss is more memorable for its picturesque setting on a finger of rock jutting into the lake than for its rather glum architecture. A well-marked **footpath** that encircles the lake and makes for a gentle afternoon's walk here

loops inland, though no-one seems terribly bothered if you peek at the hotel's grounds as you pass by.

At the lake's eastern end, **FUSCHL AM SEE** is first and foremost a bathing resort, a neat, overgrown village with an immaculate lakefront and a scattering of hotels jostling for the best position. Fuschl's beach faces west, guaranteeing long, sunny summer afternoons by the lakeside. A stark contrast to Fuschl's alpine cuteness is provided by the strikingly modern, low-rise office complex alongside the *bundesstrasse*. The glassy, pavilion-like buildings – surrounded by their own, artificial lake – are the unlikely world headquarters of the phenomenally successful **Red Bull** energy drink company.

Practicalities

Buses from Salzburg stop at Hof at the lake's western end for Schloss Fuschl and pull up outside the **tourist office** at Dorfplatz 1 (May–June & Sept Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 9am–6pm; Oct–April Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 3–5pm; ⓣ06226/8384, ⓦwww.fuschlseeregion.com) in Fuschl am See. If money is no object, *Schloss Fuschl* (ⓣ06229/22530, ⓦwww.schlossfuschl.at; 9) or its almost equally plush neighbour the *Arabella Sheraton Hotel Jagdhof* (ⓣ06229/23720, ⓦwww.sheraton.com/jagdhof; 9) are the places to **stay**; alternatively, try the lakeside *Seehotel Schlick* (ⓣ06226/8237, ⓦwww.seehotelschlick.at 4) or the idyllically situated *Pension Hohenau* (ⓣ06226/8359, ⓦwww.pension-hohenau.at; 3). Schloss Fuschl's *Imperial* **restaurant** is one of Austria's best, serving award-winning Eurasian cuisine. Fuschlsee is known for its fish, especially trout, which you can try at *Seehotel Schlick*'s restaurant.

Wolfgangsee

With an impressive backdrop of craggy sandcastle-shaped mountains to the south and the looming bulk of the Schafberg to the north, **Wolfgangsee** is one of the most beguiling of the region's lakes, with a relaxed air that belies the crowd-pulling allure of its emerald green waters. The fifteen-kilometre-long lake is almost squeezed in two around the chief resort of **St Wolfgang**, a picturesque place with a fabulous Gothic altarpiece. Like the nearby Schafberg mountain railway, however, St Wolfgang is a regular stop on the lakes-and-mountains tourist circuit, and can get pretty crowded. **St Gilgen** is also attractive, and, as a low-key watersports and paragliding centre, attracts a younger crowd, while laid-back **Strobl** is more focused on lakeside pursuits. The **winter** is quieter, though Advent markets in all three villages draw pre-Christmas crowds, and St Wolfgang serves as a base for skiers using the Postalm's pistes.

Hourly **buses** on the Salzburg–Bad Ischl route run along the southern shore, calling at St Gilgen and Strobl. To get to St Wolfgang, you often have to change at Strobl, though there are direct services between Bad Ischl and St Wolfgang. Alternatively, **lake ferries**, run by the ÖBB, shuttle between St Gilgen, St Wolfgang and Strobl (except Nov to mid Dec), though winter services are suspended if the lake freezes over, as it did in 2005/6.

St Gilgen

In many ways **ST GILGEN** is the archetypal Salzkammergut resort: an appealing combination of quaint country town, modern sporting and bathing

Salzkammergut outdoor activities

The big lakes offer a huge variety of **outdoor activities**, from swimming to high-risk sports such as paragliding. Local tourist offices will be able to give you the relevant details.

Bike rental Cycling is one of the more popular ways of discovering the Salzkammergut, with a well-surfaced and signposted 345-kilometre trail along which gradients aren't too fierce. Ordinary bikes cost €10 upwards a day: mountain bikes around €15.

Boat rental Every lake in the Salzkammergut has outfits that rent out rowing boats (Ruderboote, around €5 per hour) or pedalo-boats (Tretboote; around €8); electric boats (Elektroboote; around €12) are also fairly ubiquitous.

Paragliding On fine days, there's an endless stream of folk launching themselves off the Zwölferhorn above Wolfgangsee. Flugschule Salzkammergut (Ⓦ www.paragleiten.net) offers one-day taster courses for €60 and four day courses for €335.

Sailing The region's best-known sailing school is the Segelschule Mondsee (Ⓦ www.segelschule-mondsee.at), with another in Gmunden on Traunsee (Ⓦ www.yachtschule.at). Five-day courses on Mondsee (May to end Sept) cost €214. Dinghies can be hired on the major lakes for around €12–18 per hour.

Scuba diving You can hire scuba diving (*Tauchen*) equipment or go on a beginner's course at Mondsee ((Ⓦ www.tauch-mobil.at), St Wolfgang (Ⓦ www.tauchstation.at), at various places on Traunsee, Attersee and at Hallstaat; diving conditions vary widely. A one-day course costs around €35. In winter, you can ice dive in Attersee (Ⓦ www.austrian-divers.at).

Skiing and snowboarding The Salzkammergut is a popular winter sports destination, although only St Wolfgang often features in the package brochures. Main areas include the Postalm above Strobl (Ⓦ www.postalm.at), with plenty of easy runs, Hintersee near Fuschl, with 40km of mostly intermediate skiing, and Dachstein West above Gosau (where advanced skiers should head – see p.453).The season is from late December to early April.

Swimming The lakeside villages have a stretch of grassy shoreline, known as a Strandbad, for sunbathing and watersports; most charge a small entrance fee. The water is usually warmest in Wolfgangsee and Mondsee; some of the higher mountain lakes can be very chilly. Plastic bathing shoes are a worthwhile investment against sharp stones.

Waterskiing Waterskiing is particularly popular at Strobl and St Gilgen on Wolfgangsee and at Mondsee town, and costs around €11 per round. Alternatively you can ride an inflatable banana for €5, or cling to a giant rubber ring for €7.

Windsurfing Windsurfing is often hard work as there's rarely a strong wind. If you're experienced, you can get board rental for €10–15 per hour; otherwise, sign up for a three to five day course for €100–200.

Walking Hiking is the most popular way of seeing the Salzkammergut, especially in autumn when temperatures are more comfortable than in summer. Paths are generally well-marked with frequent *almhütte* on mountain stages for refreshments. Most of the region's walking is relatively easy, though there is some serious high altitude walking in the Dachstein range (see p.453).

centre and a base for hikers.The town centre is set back from the lake, clustered around the double-onion domed church and the attractive Rathaus, with its oriel window and porch. Between the church and the town hall, in what used to be a lace-weaver's house, is the picturesque **Heimatkundliches Museum**, on Pichlerplatz (June–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 3–6pm; €3.50, or buy a museum pass for €7.50), built in 1655. Inside, displays recall St Gilgen's role in

the eighteenth century as a lacemaking centre, aided by a decree of 1776 that forbade the import of foreign lace into Austria.

St Gilgen makes the most of its tenuous Mozart link with a **Mozart-Gedenkstätte** (June–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 3–6pm; €3.50), in the Bezirksgericht (county court) at Ischlerstr 15, not far from the lake's edge, where the composer's mother, Anna Pertl, was born on December 25, 1720. There's a limited words-and-pictures display remembering Mozart's grandfather, Wolfgang Nikolaus Pertl, who worked as a magistrate in St Gilgen and dabbled in amateur dramatics, and Mozart's talented sister Nannerl, who, by coincidence, married one of Pertl's successors as magistrate (the impressively monikered Johann Baptist von Berchtold zu Sonnenberg) and ended up living in the house in which her mother grew up. The town's **Musikinstrumente-Museum der Völker** (June to mid-Oct Tues–Sun 9–11am & 3–7pm; mid-Oct to Dec Mon–Fri 9–11am & 2–5pm; Jan–May Mon–Thurs 9–11am & 3–6pm, Fri 9–11am, Sun 3–6pm; €4), at Aberseestr 11, has a video on Mozart and stages performances using folk instruments from around the globe. There's another museum, the **Zinkenbacher Malerkolonie,** in the same building (mid-June to mid-Sept, Tues–Sun 3–7pm, €3), devoted to the group of Viennese artists who, between 1927 and 1938, painted at Zinkenbach near Abersee; the group disbanded when many members went into exile after the Nazi Anschluss.

Beyond the courthouse lies the Schiffsstation, where boats from St Wolfgang arrive and depart, and the pleasant waterfront **promenade** where most of the boat rental, waterskiing and windsurfing facilities are located. After they've wandered round the town, most visitors take a ride on the **Zwölferhorn Seilbahn** (daily: June & Sept 9am–5pm; July & Aug 9am–6pm; Oct–May 9.15am–4pm; return €17), situated next to the bus station and main road, whose dinky yellow or red four-seater gondolas convey visitors to the summit of the 1522-metre **Zwölferhorn**. After watching the paragliders launch themselves off the top, you can take a stroll along the scenic **Pillstein Panoramarundweg** or walk back to town by a number of routes (allow 2–2hr 30min), some of which stop off at the *Weisswand*, a *berggasthof* with breathtaking views of the entire lake from its cliff-edge terrace.

Another popular **walk** – taking approximately three hours – follows the Pilgrims' Way to take you round the peaceful, wooded northern end of the lake to St Wolfgang. This is one of the few stretches of lakeside in the Salzkammergut where there is no road, ensuring a much more peaceful hike. En route, the path climbs up the wooded flanks of the **Falkenstein** hill (795m); if the main route's chapels don't have much appeal you have the option of following a thrillingly scenic but rougher alternative path. This is not a good option if you suffer from vertigo, as it leads right along the cliff edge. To reach the start of the path, leave St Gilgen via Mondseestrasse as far as Brunnwinkl, then follow signs which direct you to Fürberg and beyond.

Practicalities

A right turn outside the **bus station**, and a 400m walk along the main road towards Salzburg, brings you to the **tourist office** (Mondsee Bundesstr 1a; May, June & Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–8pm, Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 10am–5pm; Oct Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm; ⓣ06227/2348, ⓦwww.wolfgangsee.at), which will advise on the availability of **private rooms** – prices range from €20–28 per person in a double with breakfast; rooms in nearby Abersee are often cheaper than in St Gilgen proper.

For **hotel** accommodation, try the convivial, central *Christerbauer*, Brunettiplatz 3 (Ⓣ06227/20457, Ⓦwww.christerbauer.at; 3), or the prettily frescoed *Gasthof zur Post*, Mozartplatz 8 (Ⓣ06227/2157; Ⓦwww.gasthofzurpost.at; 5), with some rooms decorated in boutique-hotel style and an upstairs breakfast terrace with lake views. For a truly idyllic lakeside location, head for *Gasthof Fürberg* (Ⓣ06227/2385, Ⓦwww.fuerberg.at; closed Oct–April; 6); to get there, take the boat from St Gilgen, walk the 2km around the lake or else drive or cycle via Winkl. The town's luxurious **HI hostel**, *Jugendgästehaus Schafbergblick*, is on Mondseestrasse (Ⓣ06227/2365, Ⓦwww.jugendherbergsverband.at), and has singles, doubles and dorms. There are no **campsites** in St Gilgen itself, but a whole rash of them in Abersee, including *Seecamping Wolfgangblick* (Ⓣ06227/3475) on the lakeside with views of St Wolfgang.

The **restaurant** at *Hotel Kendler* (Kirchenplatz 3) has reliable schnitzel-type fare plus a decent veggie selection, while *Wirt am Gries*, Steinklüftstr 6, offers polished interpretations of Austrian dishes and has a nice garden. *Fischerwirt* (closed Jan–March, plus Mon except in July & Aug; Ⓦwww.fischer-wirt.at), next to the Schiffstation, serves up fresh fish on its lakeside terrace. There's a smattering of bars close by, but outside peak season the lakefront dies, so you're generally better off **drinking** with the locals in the *Kupferkrug* bar at Christerbauer's or shooting pool at *Grammophon* on Steinklüftstrasse, which stays open until the last customer wants to leave.

Strobl

Less obviously photogenic than St Gilgen or St Wolfgang, **STROBL** is spared the tour groups that descend on its neighbours, and with a couple of places to hire boats and a brace of waterskiing schools it's a great place for a relaxed, beach-oriented holiday. The main bathing area, the **Seebad** (€3), is in a grassy lakeside park a few hundred metres northeast of the centre. If this gets too busy, one alternative is peaceful **Schwarzensee**, 4km to the north and accessible on foot or by car or bike; there are a couple of places to eat and from here a mountain bike trail loops behind the Schafberg towards Attersee and Mondsee.

Strobl also offers access to excellent **walks**, the best of which are around the **Postalm** to the south, which are reached by a twelve-kilometre toll road (€4.50) that winds up a sequence of hairpin bends, and is served by a daily bus. A large expanse of high alpine meadow (or *alm*), the Postalm offers excellent views of the surrounding mountains; in winter it's popular as a place to learn to ski. Kids and adults alike may enjoy the Sommerrodelbahn or **summer toboggan** (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm; €6) at Gschwendt, 2.5km west of Strobl on the main road to St Gilgen.

Emil Jannings

Strobl was for many years the home of **Emil Jannings** (1884–1950), the half-American actor who became a star in the silent era and was the recipient of the first ever Oscar in 1929, for his performances in *The Way of all Flesh* and *The Last Command*. The following year he returned to Europe to star opposite Marlene Dietrich in *The Blue Angel*, the film, based on the Heinrich Mann novel *Professor Unrat*, that brought Dietrich international fame. Unlike Dietrich, Jannings stayed in Germany under the Nazis, latterly appearing in several of the regime's more overtly ideological films, and when he died of cancer in Strobl in 1950 he was in disgrace, a lifelong acting ban having been imposed by the Allied authorities despite his eminence as an artist. A bust at Emil-Jannings-Platz commemorates his link with the town.

Practicalities

Strobl's **bus station** is in Bahnstrasse; turn right out of it and head into the village, turning right again at Emil-Jannings-Platz along Ischlerstrasse to reach the village centre, huddled around the church. The **tourist office** (May & Oct Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; June & Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 10am–1pm; ⓣ06137/7255, ⓦwww.wolfgangsee.at), on Dorfplatz, will check vacancies in **private rooms** for you. Moderately priced **accommodation** is available at the comfortable modern chalet-style *Pension Kasberger*, east of the village centre at Salzburgerstr 188 (ⓣ06137/7249, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/pensionkasberger; 2). At the other end of the scale, the centrally located *Brandauer's*, Moosgasse 73 (ⓣ06137/7205, ⓦwww.brandauers.info; 7), is a lovely nineteenth-century villa with a modern extension and direct access to the lake. Somewhere between the two in price and facilities is the *Stroblerhof*, Ischlerstr 16 (ⓣ06137/7308, ⓦwww.stroblerhof.at; 6), which has a sauna and spa. The nearest **campsites** are towards St Wolfgang or in Abersee, 3km west of town, off the St Gilgen road.

For **food**, *Brandauer*'s restaurant has wienerschnitzel or salads at around €12, while the *Lilly* restaurant at Seegasthof Jenisch (closed Tues) has a waterfront terrace and serves excellent fresh fish. Strobl **nightlife** centres on the *Stroblerhof*, which has a restaurant specializing in fish and Mediterranean cooking, as well as a pub and disco. The *Laimeralm* (ⓣ06137/7262), set in the hills 4km to the southeast and reached by courtesy buses from Strobl (check with the tourist office), is a well-known and enjoyably kitschy folk venue, with live shows on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons (mid-May to mid-Oct).

St Wolfgang

ST WOLFGANG, 4km west of Strobl, is the oldest and most picturesque place on the lake, its tall old buildings and flower-bedecked balconies shading narrow lanes. It's also very touristy, with more souvenir shops than anywhere else in the Salzkammergut. Part responsibility for the crowds, and the village's Ruritanian image, goes to Ralph Benatzky and Robert Stolz's 1930 operetta, *White Horse Inn*, inspired by the *Im Weissen Rössl* hotel on the lakefront and filmed at least twice. It's regularly performed at St Wolfgang's cultural centre, the Michael-Pacher-Haus, on Michael-Pacher-Strasse, in summer.

The town owes its existence – and name – to the tenth-century Bishop of Regensburg, **St Wolfgang**, who came to this area to reorganize the Benedictine monastery at Mondsee. He built a chapel on a small promontory jutting into the lake that would later bear his name, around which a settlement grew, soon to become a pilgrimage centre devoted to his cult. Wolfgang's original hermitage is incorporated into the **Pfarrkirche**, superbly positioned just above the lake at the heart of the village. Nowadays, tourists flock here to admire the famous high altar by Tyrolean master **Michael Pacher** (see opposite), one of the high points of Austrian Gothic art. An extravagantly pinnacled twelve-metre high structure, it was probably built with the help of the artist's brother Friedrich, and completed sometime between 1471 and 1481 in Pacher's home town of Bruneck before being carted over the Alps to St Wolfgang. Brightly gilded, sculpted scenes of the *Coronation of the Virgin* form the centrepiece; St Wolfgang himself is the figure on the left holding a model of the church. The predella is devoted to a depiction of the *Adoration*, flanked by the *Visitation* and the *Flight into Egypt*. Most days only the outer panels of the altar wings are on display, depicting scenes from the life of St Wolfgang, but from Ash Wednesday to the day before Palm Sunday the

wings are opened to allow a glimpse of the eight richly coloured paintings from the life of Christ. Providing a contrast to Pacher's work is the gaudy black and gold Baroque **Schwanthaler Altar** halfway up the nave. According to tradition (and such stories are common in places where Gothic altars like Pacher's survive), the artist commissioned to produce a replacement for Pacher's altar, which was due to be trashed, deliberately made his own work too big to fit the space reserved for it. The equally ornate **pulpit** is by Meinrad Guggenbichler (see p.433), and features a flock of sheep being hugged by various cherubs and the Good Shepherd. When you leave, have a drink from the delightful Renaissance **pilgrims' fountain** by the church.

St Wolfgang's other great tourist magnet is the **Schafbergbahn**, a mountain rack railway operated by antique steam (and diesel) locomotives which ascends the 1783-metre **Schafberg**, the peak which towers over the lake to the north. The station is a one-kilometre walk west of the village centre and has its own landing stage for the lake ferries arriving from Strobl and St Gilgen. There are between three and eleven trains daily (May–Oct; return €20; combination "Ship & Mountain" tickets available with lake steamers), but the trip is vastly (and deservingly) popular, so get there early if you want to avoid queues. From mid-October the service only runs in fine weather. To be

Michael Pacher

Although nowadays recognized as the leading Austrian painter and sculptor of the fifteenth century, **Michael Pacher** remains an enigma. He was well-respected in his day, but many of his works were destroyed or broken up during the eighteenth-century enthusiasm for all things Baroque, making it difficult for historians to assemble an accurate picture of his career. He was born sometime between 1430 and 1435 in or around the South Tyrolean town of Bruneck (now Brunico in Italy). Having picked up the rudiments of painting and sculpture, probably as apprentice to a local artist, Pacher studied in Padua, then the main cultural centre of northern Italy. Here, he absorbed the artistic traditions of the Italian Renaissance – both from the fine paintings in Padua's churches, and from contact with the many other painters who congregated here at the time, among them Andrea Mantegna, with whom it is thought Pacher was acquainted. Most importantly, Pacher received a thorough grounding in contemporary experiments with perspective and light, giving his subsequent paintings a measure of depth and realism that was unique among the artists of the Austrian lands.

By the late 1460s he had returned to Bruneck and established a workshop turning out altarpieces for local churches. Few survive, although individual pieces of sculpture and paintings from them are preserved in museums and galleries. It's unclear when Pacher died, but his last-known works were completed in Salzburg (where a sculpture of the Virgin still survives in the Franziskanerkirche; see p.383) in the early 1490s.

The altar at St Wolfgang is the only one of Pacher's altars to have remained completely intact. It was commissioned in 1471 by Benedict, Abbot of Mondsee, for 1200 Hungarian florins, 50 of which were paid in advance. There was no real deadline for completing the altar because Benedict was still building the choir of the church for which it was intended, and Pacher probably didn't start on it until 1478–79. It was a typical piece of workshop-made art, with Pacher himself planning the whole enterprise and executing the most demanding paintings and sculptures, while his assistants did the rest.

Elsewhere, the best collections of Michael Pacher's art are to be found in the Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck (see p.474), and the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

sure of the full steam experience you'll need to take one of the twice daily *Nostalgiezüge* (July to early Sept). You can **walk** up the Schafbergweg that runs alongside the railway, reaching the top in about three and a half hours. Once there, take in the awesome views over Wolfgangsee, and towards Mondsee and Attersee to the north. The *Schafbergspitze* (Ⓣ06138/2232-18, Ⓦwww.schafberg.net) provides food, drink and accommodation (€53 per person including the return rail fare) should you get stranded at the top. If you want to walk down, the most exhilarating descent is via the Himmelspforte, west of the hotel, from which a precipitous zigzag path takes you under the sheer cliffs of the Schafberg's northern face. En route back to St Wolfgang, take a dip in the icy waters of Mönichsee.

Practicalities

A road tunnel bypasses St Wolfgang. **Buses** from Strobl drop you at either end, neither of which is far from the village centre. Car drivers must use one of the numbered **car parks** before or after the tunnel. There are two **tourist offices**: the main one is just before the tunnel's eastern entrance (May Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; June & early Sept Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat 9am–noon & 2–6pm; July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–8pm, Sat 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 2–6pm; Oct Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; Ⓣ06138/8003, Ⓦwww.wolfgangsee.at), with a subsidiary one at the western end in the Michael-Pacher-Haus (June–Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm).

Either can fix you up with a **private room**, though there's no shortage of atmospheric, affordable *Gasthöfe* in the centre of town. The *Schwarzes Rössl*, Markt 30 (Ⓣ06138/2373, Ⓦwww.hotel-schwarzesroessl.at; closed Nov & early Dec; ❹), offers bright rooms with en-suite facilities, many with balconies. Plush rooms with traditional furnishings are the norm at *Im Weissen Rössl*, Markt 74 (Ⓣ06138/2306-0, Ⓦwww.weissesroessl.at; ❾), the waterfront hotel that inspired the operetta; a more secluded, and even more luxurious, option is the lakeside *Landhaus zu Appesbach* (Ⓣ06138/2209, Ⓦwww.appesbach.com; ❾), 1km out of town along the Strobl road; the Duke of Windsor stayed here following his abdication. The best **campsite** is *Berau* (Ⓣ06138/2543, Ⓦwww.berau.at; open all year), a further kilometre along the Strobl road and a short walk from Strobl itself.

There's no end of **restaurants** offering Austrian standards to the tourist hordes; prices are fairly reasonable. *Andy's Stehbuffet*, at the foot of Markt near the waterfront, is the place for wurst-type **snacks**, while the nearby *Wolfgangstuben* offers more substantial sit-down fare at low prices. *Mirabella*, Markt 152, serves inexpensive pizzas and pasta. Moving up in price, *Hubertuskeller*, Markt 46, has fish and – in season – game, plus cheaper *knödl* dishes, while the *Weisses Rössl* (see above) offers top-quality grub (reservations advised) on a lakefront terrace or in its elegant dining room. The **bar** at *Kap Horn* opposite the Michael-Pacher-Haus is smart, trendy and open until 4am, and there's a disco, *Disco Shooters*, next door.

Mondsee

With the sheer rocky walls of the Drachenwand and the Schafberg rising from its southern shore, **Mondsee** lends itself equally to all-out activity or lazy waterside contemplation. If you want the latter, head for one of the settlements along the southeastern shore. Most life on Mondsee, however, revolves around the town of the same name in the northwest, an engaging place that grew up

around a Benedictine **monastery** established by Bavarians in the eighth century. It was here that St Wolfgang, Bishop of Regensburg, arrived in 976 to take a rest cure, embark on monastic reforms, and build a chapel in what is now St Wolfgang over the hills to the southeast. Nowadays, the proximity of Salzburg ensures a healthy influx of pleasure-seekers on summer weekends.

Getting to Mondsee is straightforward: the A1 Salzburg–Vienna autobahn sweeps past the lake and town, and there are frequent buses from Salzburg. There are no regular lake ferries on Mondsee, though tour boats offer **cruises** from April to October.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Buses arrive in Mondsee at the Postamt a couple of blocks south west of the town centre: head up Franz-Kreuzberger-Strasse, then right along Rainerstrasse. The **tourist office** lies between the Marktplatz and the lake at Dr-Franz-Müller-Str 3 (June & Sept Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–6pm; July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat & Sun 9am–7pm; Oct–May Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; ⓣ06232/2270, ⓦwww.mondsee.at), and will fix you up with a **private room**. Mondsee has plenty of **accommodation**, from farmhouses in the suburb of Tiefgraben north of the autobahn to *Pension Klimesch*, M.-Guggenbichler-Str 13 (ⓣ06232/2563, ⓦwww.oberoesterreich.at/klimesch.mondsee; ❸), a roomy, modern place near the lakefront. For a bit of lakeside luxury, head for the *Seegasthof-Hotel Lackner* (ⓣ06232/23590, ⓦwww.seehotel-lackner.at; ❻), just west of the Seebad. The **HI hostel**, at Krankenhausstr 9 (ⓣ06232/2418, ⓦwww.jugendherbergsverband.at; closed mid-Jan to mid-Feb), offers dorm beds plus a few doubles and singles, although it soon fills up. The most peaceful of the lake's campsites are in St Lorenz, on the southern shore: try *Austria Camp Mondsee* (ⓣ06232/2927; May–Sept).

The Town

MONDSEE's picturesque, café-strewn **Marktplatz** is set back from the lake, and lined with pretty pastel-coloured Baroque facades. On the east side of the Marktplatz is the broad Wrede Platz, presided over by the impressive vanilla-yellow bulk of the twin-towered **Pfarrkirche St Michael**, originally the church of the former Benedictine monastery, which retains its fifteenth-century net vaulting, and its distinctive red marble altar steps, familiar to many from the wedding scene of *The Sound of Music*. Other visitors are more likely to thrill to the name of **Meinrad Guggenbichler** (1649–1723), the Swiss-born sculptor who spent most of his life working at the monastery, producing seven of the thirteen black-and-gold Baroque side altars adorning the church. The harmonious combination of columns, arches and attendant statuary that form the altar-surrounds marks Guggenbichler as a master; the paintings that form the centrepieces of the altars were executed by other artists, and are for the most part less spectacular. The Corpus Christi Altar, the second one in the north aisle, is probably Guggenbichler's finest, its six spiralling columns wreathed with gilded vines and supported by cherubic foursomes clutching grapes. Outside, on Kirchengasse, next to the larger war memorial, stands a small memorial to the 43 Mondsee men captured at Stalingrad who never returned.

Next to the church, the former monastery houses the **Museum Mondseeland** (May, June & Sept Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; July & Aug Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Oct Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; €3), which features Baroque statuary from the monastery (including a few small-scale pieces by Guggenbichler and the Maria

Coeli altar from the former monastery church) and an array of Neolithic finds. Nineteenth-century archeologists working at the eastern end of Mondsee discovered lake dwellings that had been mounted on stilts (pfahlen) dating from around 2500 BC, shedding light on a phase of Neolithic history that has been dubbed the "Mondsee culture". A selection of beakers and cups decorated with zigzags and circles steal the limelight in a collection otherwise dominated by fragments of functional, unadorned pottery. At one side of the over-restored cloisters you can view the monk's cell supposedly occupied by St Wolfgang himself.

A short stroll behind the church up Kirchengasse, on a grassy slope overlooking the town, is the **Freilichtmuseum** (May–Aug Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Sept Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Oct Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; €2.20), comprising a few outbuildings and a couple of traditional farmhouses, the most evocative of which is the eighteenth-century **Rauchhaus** (literally "smoke-house"). One of two open-hearth stoves on the ground floor is usually stoked up and smoking to give visitors an idea of what life might have been like – above it joints of meat would have been hung for home curing. The family living quarters are set to one side, away from the rising fumes, but farm labourers, servants and guests would have been expected to sleep in the malodorous bedrooms upstairs. Most of the furniture is prettily painted in the manner favoured by peasants throughout the German speaking world.

A small promenade and a public bathing beach, the Seebad (€4.80), extend along the **lakefront** 500m south of the centre. A couple of huts on the water's edge rent out electric boats and pedalos, while windsurfing boards can be rented from the busy Segelschule beside the Seebad. Just inland, the **Lokalbahnmuseum** (May–Sept Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 2–5pm; plus July & Aug Fri 2–5pm; €3) recalls a now-vanished narrow-gauge railway that once connected Mondsee with Salzburg and Bad Ischl, displaying a couple of restored steam locomotives and a model railway.

Eating and drinking

If the weather's fine, it's nice to sit out at one of the **cafés** on the main square, the finest of which is the *Frauenschuh* (closed Wed), a venerable Kaffeehaus and Konditorei. Opposite, there's a choice between *Vini e Panini*, a smart salad and pasta bar, and the next-door *Pizzeria Nudelini*. For a quick snack, *Imbiss Stube*, M-Guggenbichler-Str 5, is good for a stand-up sausage or sit-down goulash, while *Fishermans* on the Robert Baum Promenade is the place to enjoy ice cream with a lake view. For more substantial fare, the *Neue Post*, Rainerstr 9 and the quaint old *Blaue Traube* are the best places to sample traditional Austrian cooking and fresh lake fish. For drinking, try two bars along Herzog-Odilo-Strasse, the northern continuation of Marktplatz: *Barra Cubano*, at no. 6, has a tropical look and relaxed feel, and *New Mex*, on the other side of the road, has kitsch decor and Mexican nibbles.

Attersee

A short hop east of Mondsee lies **Attersee,** which, at 20km in length, is by far the largest of the Salzkammergut lakes. At its southern end, it's very beautiful, the lake's placid waters dominated by the Höllengebirge (Mountains of Hell), whose craggy outline can compete with that of any of the neighbouring lakes, but at its northern end the hills fall away and the shores assume a suburban blandness. A century ago, Attersee was one of the region's

most popular spots, attracting thousands of pleasure-seekers, among them Mahler and Klimt. These days the boat houses, bathing places and huddles of scuba divers crowding its shores leave no doubt that the water itself is the main draw.

Fans of **Gustav Mahler** might like to visit **STEINBACH**, three-quarters of the way down the eastern shore, where the composer spent four successive summers from 1893 at the *Gasthof und Fleischhäuerei zum Höllengebirge* (now the *Gasthof Föttinger*) until they put up the prices. At the time the village was far from the hoi polloi, and Mahler spent most mornings cooped up in a little purpose-built *Komponierhäuschen*, where he worked on his second and third symphonies. Mahler was extremely sensitive to noise, and the rest of his entourage had to make sure they kept the children away and paid off organ-grinders before they started; in addition, the bells on the local cows were muffled and birds kept at bay by a scarecrow. A reconstruction of Mahler's **Häuschen** stands in the lakeside Seefeld campsite (to gain entry, pop into the *Gasthof* for the key). Mahler was a keen walker, and Steinbach remains an excellent base for those wishing to explore the nearby Höllengebirge peaks. The tourist office (see below) can provide details.

Gustav Klimt was even more attached to Attersee, whiling away every summer here from 1901 until his death in 1918. His mistress, the designer Emilie Flöge, owned a house in **UNTERACH**, a smart little village in the southwestern corner of the lake. Klimt spent the summers painting alfresco straight onto canvas, often rowing out into the lake to work. Unterach features in several of Klimt's paintings, as does nearby Weissenbach, the tree-lined avenue leading to Schloss Kammer, and the small island near Litzlberg. Tourist offices in the lakeside villages have copies of a free map, *Themenweg Klimt am Attersee*, which will guide you easily enough to the subjects of his paintings despite the German-only text. Between Unterach and Weissenbach is probably Attersee's most spectacular sight, the Burggraben Klamm or **Burgauklamm**, a thin 30ft waterfall in a dead-end rock amphitheatre suffused with spray. From the *Jägerwirt* gasthof on the main road, it's not much more than a ten-minute walk up the ravine, along a dramatic (and increasingly precarious) path.

Practicalities

Road and rail connections with Attersee are best from the north, where the A1 Salzburg–Vienna autobahn skirts the lake. A narrow-gauge rail line runs from Vöcklamarkt on the main line to Attersee town, while buses link Vöcklabruck station to the station at Kammer-Schörfling. In spring and summer **ferries** run from Attersee on two separate routes; the more scenically interesting southern route runs daily from April to September. From Kammer-Schörfling you must first take the northern route (weekends only outside high season) and then change at either Weyregg or Attersee to continue south. There are **tourist offices** in all the main lakeside villages, with the main one in the Gemeindeamt, west of Attersee train station and close to the Erlebnisbad on the lakeshore (May–June & Sept Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm; July & Aug daily 9am–6pm; Oct–April Mon–Fri 9am–4.30pm; ⓣ07666/7719, ⓦwww.attersee.at), all of which can organize **private rooms**.

In Unterach, you can stay in a small lakeside **pension** like *Pension Zettelmühl* at Atterseestr 45 (ⓣ07665/8515, ⓦwww.tiscover.com/zettelmuehle; ❷), 2.5km from the village centre towards Attersee, or up in the hills to the north with great views at the *Druckerhof*, Druckerstr 15 (ⓣ07665/8295, ⓦwww.druckerhof.com; closed Nov ❹). The only **youth hostel** on Attersee

is just behind the church in Weyregg, on the eastern shore (☎07664/2780, ⓦwww.jutel.at; May to early Oct). A good lakeside **campsite** is Unterach's *Insel-Camping* (☎07665/8311, ⓦwww.inselcamp.at; March–Oct) on an island just south of the village.

Bad Ischl

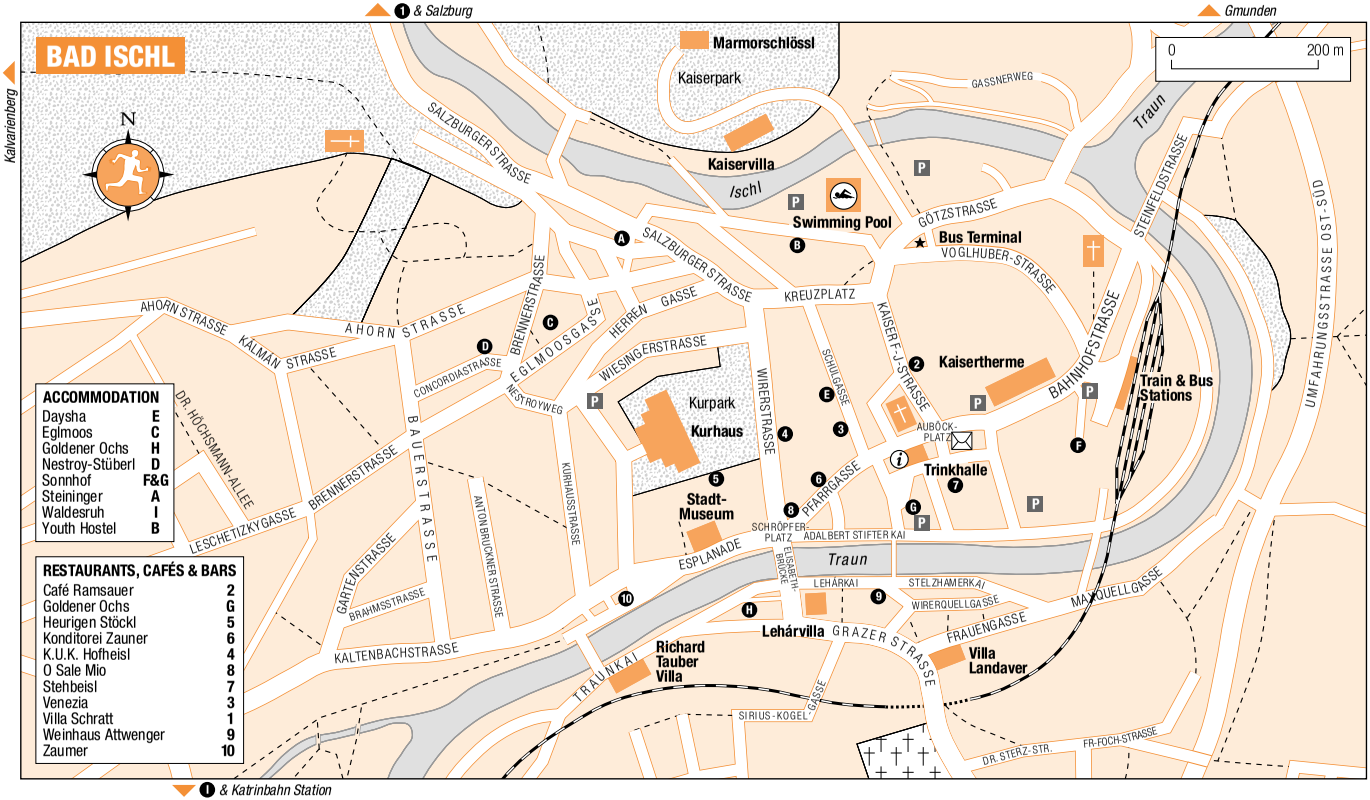
BAD ISCHL is Austria's most famous spa, primarily because the emperor Franz-Josef I spent every summer here from his early childhood until 1914, two years before his death, and the town thus became the empire's *de facto* summer capital. Given that it isn't actually on any of the region's celebrated lakes it may seem an odd choice, but Franz-Josef was a man of simple tastes, and then as now, the main draw was probably the town's pivotal position within the Salzkammergut. Most of the major lakes (except Attersee) have direct bus services, and the region's north–south railway line runs through the town. Location aside, Bad Ischl's cultural associations are legion, it's less oppressively touristy than some of the lakeside villages, and along the riverfront, at least, the atmosphere of sedate nineteenth-century gentility remains palpable.

Bad Ischl began as a centre for the salt-processing industry, only becoming a spa in the 1820s when Vienna's big-shot physicians discovered from local doctor, Josef Götz, that saltwater baths relieved the rheumatism suffered by salt workers. Soon it became one of central Europe's most illustrious spas, attracting the likes of Strauss, Lehár, Bruckner and Brahms, as well as the explosives manufacturer and philanthropist Alfred Nobel. The brother of Emperor Franz, Archduke Rudolph, Bishop of Olomouc (Olmütz), was an early visitor, and Metternich had Ischl saltwater delivered to him in Vienna. Archduchess Sophie ascribed prodigious powers to the waters after becoming pregnant with the future emperor Franz-Josef here in 1829, and she brought her brood (nicknamed the *Salzprinzen* – salt princes – due to Ischl's role in their conception) on holiday here every summer thereafter. It was here that Franz-Josef became engaged to the 15-year-old Bavarian princess, Elisabeth of Wittelsbach. The emperor eventually acquired the opulent **Kaiservilla**, from which he could walk upstream to the holiday home of his mistress in time for breakfast.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Bad Ischl stands at the confluence of two rivers, with the compact town centre wedged between the Ischl to the north and the Traun to the south. Both the **bus** and **train station** are on the eastern fringe of the town centre; in the spring of 2008 the tourist office relocated to the restored **Trinkhalle** a few minutes west of the train station at Auböckplatz (May to mid-Sept Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–3pm, Sun 10am–1pm; mid-Sept to April Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ☎06132/27757, ⓦwww.badischl.at). **Salzkammergut Touristik** (Götzstr 12, ☎06132.24000-0, ⓦwww.salzkammergut.co.at, daily 9am–8pm) near the bus terminal sells maps and guide books, rents cars and bikes and offers cheap Internet access.

There are plenty of **private rooms**, and a modern, functional **HI hostel** near the swimming pool at Am Rechensteg 5 (☎06132/26577, ⓦwww.jugendherbergsverband.at).


BAD ISCHL
Kalvarienberg
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200 m
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Kaiserpark
Kaiservilla
Ischl
Swimming Pool
Bus Terminal
Kaiserthermе
Train & Bus Stations
Trinkhalle
Kurpark
Kurhaus
Stadt-Museum
Lehárvilla
Richard Tauber Villa
Villa Landaver
Traun
SALZBURGER STRASSE
GASSNERWEG
GÖTZSTRASSE
VOGLHUBER-STRASSE
STEINFELDSTRASSE
UMFAHRUNGSSTRASSE OST-SÜD
BAHNHOFSTRASSE
KREUZPLATZ
KAISERFJ.STRASSE
AUBÖCK-PLATZ
SCHULGASSE
WIRERSTRASSE
HERRENGASSE
WIESINGERSTRASSE
BRENNERSTRASSE
EGLMOOSGASSE
CONCORDIASTRASSE
NESTROYWEG
AHORNSTRASSE
KALMANSTRASSE
DR. HÖCHSMANN-ALLEE
LESCHETIZKYGASSE
BAUERSTRASSE
KURHAUSSTRASSE
ANTON BRUCKNER STRASSE
GARTENSTRASSE
BRAHMSSTRASSE
KALTENBACHSTRASSE
ESPLANADE
SCHRÖPFER-PLATZ
ELISABETH-BRÜCKE
ADALBERT STIFTER KAI
PFARRGASSE
LEHÁRKAI
STELZHAMERKAI
WIREQUELLGASSE
MAXQUELLGASSE
FRAUENGASSE
GRAZER STRASSE
TRAUNKAI
SIRIUS-KOGEL GASSE
DR. STERZ-STR.
FR-FOCH-STRASSE
ACCOMMODATION
Daysha E
Eglmoos C
Goldener Ochs H
Nestroy-Stüberl D
Sonnhof F&G
Steininger A
Waldesruh I
Youth Hostel B
RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS & BARS
Café Ramsauer 2
Goldener Ochs G
Heurigen Stöckl 5
Konditorei Zauner 6
K.U.K. Hofheisl 4
O Sale Mio 8
Stehbeisl 7
Venezia 3
Villa Schratt 1
Weinhaus Attwenger 9
Zaumer 10
I & Katrinbahn Station

▲ Kurhaus Bad Ischl

Hotels and pensions

Daysha Schulgasse 9 ⓣ06132/28984, ⓦwww.dayshahotel.com. Discreet, stylish boutique hotel in a quiet, central location, with Aveda spa and a trendy restaurant serving world cuisine. 9

Eglmoos Eglmoosgasse 14 ⓣ06132/23154. An ivy-clad, balconied building with clean and comfy rooms, all with shared facilities. Cyclists are particularly welcome. Open July–Sept. 3

Goldener Ochs Grazer Str 4 ⓣ06132/23529, ⓦwww.goldenerochs.at. Large, traditionally styled hotel on the riverside, close to the Lehár villa, in origin an inn dating back to 1791. Very smart and comfortable for the price. 5

Nestroy-Stüberl Brennerstr 16 ⓣ06132/23017, ⓦwww.nestroy-stueberl.at. A modern building in a residential area at the bottom of the Kalvarienberg, a wooded hill just west of the centre. All rooms have en-suite shower and TV. 3

Sonnhof Bahnhofstr 4 ⓣ06132/23078, ⓦwww.sonnhof.at. One of the nicest (though not the cheapest) pensions in town, in a leafy location near the town centre, offering rooms with en-suite facilities and a mix of traditional and modern furnishings. 6

Steininger Leitenbergerstr 2 ⓣ06132/25260, ⓦwww.gh-steininger.at. Simple, large and clean rooms with TV and shower, above a bar near the town centre. Closed mid-Jan to mid-Feb. 3

Waldesruh Kaltenbachstr 43 ⓣ06132/24558, ⓦwww.pensionwaldesruh.at.ft. Modern chalet-style pension southwest of the centre, near the Katrin gondola station. All rooms have a balcony and en-suite facilities. 3

The town and around

Bad Ischl is surprisingly busy, with traffic pounding round its one-way system and only a few leafy spaces in which to recuperate, though the green hills pressing in on all sides temper the urban feel. The **Kurpark**, west of Wirerstrasse, features the obligatory nineteenth-century **Kurhaus** – where the town's operetta season is staged – and frequent outdoor concerts and events, but it's a fairly minuscule, if immaculate, park. The most obvious sign of spa life is the **Kaisertherme** complex on Voglhuberstrasse (closed for rebuilding at the time of writing; check with the tourist office for information), which offers the usual saunas, pools and steam rooms. The **Trinkhalle** (daily 8am–6pm), the long, bare pump rooms on Auböckplatz, hosts book fairs or flea markets, with concerts by the Kurorchester and others in the evening.

West of the centre, the leafy **Esplanade** leads along the banks of the Traun past a sequence of quaint town houses. At no. 10, the **Museum der Stadt** (July & Aug daily 10am–5pm; Sept, Oct & Dec–June Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €4.50) is housed in the former *Hotel Austria*, where the 24-year-old emperor Franz-Josef became engaged in August 1853 to his cousin, the future Empress Elisabeth (see p.124). The tradition continues to this day, since the museum also serves as the local register office. Photographs and mementoes of the imperial family dominate the museum's collection, the events recorded including summer visits by the British King Edward VII to Bad Ischl in 1907 and 1908, during which the British monarch tried to prise the emperor away from his alliance with the German Kaiser Wilhelm II. One section charts the development of the spa, which changed the face of Bad Ischl between 1823 and 1850. There's also a section detailing Salzkammergut custom and costume. Among items on show are folk-costume essentials like the curious Goldhaube, an embroidered cap of gold-coloured material.

A little further west, a small gazebo, now a display window for the Lodenfrey boutique, was once the town's bandstand; the nearby branch of the **Café Zauner**,

Franz Lehár

Franz Lehár (1870–1948) was the Andrew Lloyd Webber of his day, writing musical theatre for a wide audience and earning a fortune in the process. He revitalized Viennese operetta and made himself a millionaire with **Die lustige Witwe** (The Merry Widow) in 1905.

Born in the Hungarian barracks town of **Komárom** (Komárno) where his father was a military bandmaster, Lehár spent his childhood stationed with his father's regiment in various Austro-Hungarian towns, entering the Prague conservatory aged 12 to study the violin. Dvorák, no less, reputedly advised him: "Hang up your fiddle and start composing." When called up for military service he followed in his father's footsteps as a regimental bandmaster, then in 1902 settled in Vienna and started conducting at the Theater an der Wien, one of the city's principal operetta houses.

Featuring a plot charged with tingling emotional encounters, plenty of misunderstandings and a Ruritanian setting, *Die lustige Witwe* (with a libretto written by Oscar Léon and Leo Stein) became a Viennese sensation and went on to take audiences in Germany, London and New York by storm. The score inaugurated what became known as the Silver Age of Viennese operetta, epitomized by Lehár and fellow Hungarian Emmerich Kálmán.

After a couple of flops, Lehár scored further international success with *Der Graf von Luxemburg* (1909) and *Zigeunerliebe* (*Gypsy Love*) in 1910. World War I dampened the worldwide popularity of Viennese music, but the subsequent downturn in Lehár's career was overcome by his association with the tenor Richard Tauber, who became the most celebrated performer of his music and gave his name to **Tauberlieder**, hugely popular songs that became more famous than the operettas that spawned them. The most famous of all, *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz* (*You are my Heart's Delight*), comes from Lehár's last international triumph, *Das Land des Lächelns* (*The Land of Smiles*, 1929).

Despite having a Jewish wife, Lehár stayed in Austria after the Anschluss. He was one of Hitler's favourite composers, and prepared a new overture to *Die lustige Witwe*, which he dedicated to the Führer in an attempt to protect himself and his wife; on one occasion only Lehár's presence in the house prevented his wife from disappearing into the hands of the Gestapo. Lehár moved to Switzerland after the war, before taking up full-time residence in Bad Ischl, where he died in 1948. His Jewish collaborator Fritz Löhner, who co-wrote the libretto to *Das Land des Lächelns*, was less fortunate, dying at Auschwitz in 1942.

another elegant riverside pavilion, is where in season you can hear the **Kurquartett** play bittersweet operetta music to accompany your cake and coffee.

On the opposite bank of the Traun, across the Elisabethbrücke, you can take a guided tour of the **Lehárvilla** (May–Sept daily 10am–5pm; €4.80), a handsome mansion with a lovely wooden balcony that was the home of composer **Franz Lehár** (see box, p.439), who achieved his breakthrough with the 1905 operetta *Die lustige Witwe* (*The Merry Widow*). He spent nearly every summer in the villa from 1910 to his death here in 1948. Some original manuscripts are displayed, including that of *Dein ist Mein Ganzes Herz,* the best known of the so-called *Tauberlieder.* Paintings on the staircase of scenes from Hungarian history recall the composer's origins; the Steinway piano, a gift from Richard Tauber, recalls the two men's astonishingly successful collaboration. The bedroom is preserved as it was on the day **Lehár** died: somewhat creepily, his last pencil jottings remain on the bedside table and the brown and faded calendar is open at Sunday, October 24, 1948. He was buried in the town cemetery, on the hill behind the house along Grazer Strasse. His **memorial**, in the colonnade on the left side of the cemetery, is as elegantly minimalist as his music was sweetly sentimental. Another noted operetta composer, Oscar Straus, is buried nearby. On the way to the cemetery you pass one of the more impressive villas from Bad Ischl's Biedermeyer heyday: at Frauengasse 2, the **Villa Landauer** is an extraordinary confection in early gothic revival style.

A little west of the Lehár Villa on Traunkai stands the former home of Lehár's long time collaborator, the tenor **Richard Tauber**. The impressive, *kaisergelb* villa is marked by a plaque. Very much the Pavarotti of his day, Tauber was part-Jewish, and his international celebrity did nothing to protect him from Nazi attacks. He fled to London in 1938.

The Kaiserpark

Most visitors to Bad Ischl pay homage to the emperor Franz-Josef's holiday home in the **Kaiserpark**, on the wooded north bank of the River Ischl. As you cross the bridge you must decide if you're going to visit just the park (€3.50), or take a guided tour of the Kaiservilla as well (€9.50). Since the park isn't particularly extensive, you might as well visit both while you're there.

The **Kaiservilla** (Feb–March & Nov Wed 10am–4pm; April daily 10am–4pm; May–Oct daily 9.30am–4.45pm; Dec to early Jan daily 10am–4pm) is a stiff, if impressive, Neoclassical mansion with friezes on hunting themes. It was purchased from a Viennese lawyer by the Archduchess Sophie as an engagement present for Franz-Josef and Elisabeth, then enlarged with wings to form an "E" shaped plan in tribute to the bride. Anything less like a hunting lodge would be difficult to imagine, and though Franz-Josef came here every summer for the next sixty years, it was never the happy love nest originally envisaged. In the 1880s, Elisabeth encouraged Franz-Josef to take the actress Katharina Schratt as his mistress. Schratt was given her own Ischl retreat, the Villa Felicitas (now the Villa Schratt), at a discreet distance from the Kaiservilla – the key which enabled her to take a short cut through the Kaiserpark was presented to her by the empress herself. The emperor also liked to relax in the company of local serving girls, delivered to the mountain huts where he stopped off during hunting trips. Franz-Josef's passion for the hunt sent him roaming the hills around Ischl, Goisern and Attersee in search of prey – the heads and antlers of his victims crowd the villa's walls, and the *Schussliste* records that he shot over 50,000 creatures.

The tour begins at the foot of the stairs, where the sedan chair that once ferried his mother Archduchess Sophie now stands. Sedan chairs were common in Bad Ischl right up to 1914; as well as being a means of getting around town,

pampered visitors were ferried up mountainsides in them. Upstairs the tour takes in the imperial breakfast room and the pink *Empfangshalle*, where visiting heads of state were received. Franz-Josef was afraid of fire, so the villa has no kitchens; they were housed in a separate building. The tour also visits the emperor's study: it was the focus of frenzied diplomatic activity on June 28, 1914 following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo and it was here that Franz-Josef signed the ultimatum against Serbia; on 28 July, informed that hostilities had begun, he signed the manifesto *An meine Völker* ("to my peoples"), a copy of which stands on the desk. On July 30, 1914 the emperor left Bad Ischl for Vienna, never to return.

Beyond the villa lies the appealingly faded **Marmorschlössl** (little marble castle), a neo-Gothic retreat built for the empress Elisabeth, with a lovely, decayed loggia, almost entirely overrun by rampant vines. The building houses a **Photomuseum** (April–Oct daily 9.30am–5pm; €1.50), containing archaic cameras, family albums from the turn of the twentieth century, and a section on the history of the Leica (with an English-language voice-over), the prototype for the compact cameras of today.

Around Bad Ischl

If dead royals and composers pall, lighter nostalgia is on offer at the **Fahrzeugmuseum** at Sulzbach 178, off the Bad Goisern road on the south side of the town (April–Oct daily 9am–6pm; €8). It's a likeable assemblage of vehicles of all kinds, from steam locomotives to the world's smallest sports car, military vehicles from World War II and a giant Russian MIL Mi-8S helicopter.

There are several small hillocks within easy reach of the centre of town: **Siriuskogel** (599m), to the south, up Sirius-Kogel-Gasse; **Kalvarienberg** (606m), to the northwest; and **Jainzenberg** (834m), behind the Kaiserpark to the north. The most direct route to higher planes, however, is provided by the Katrinbahn gondola (mid-May to Oct & mid Dec to Easter 9am–5pm; €13.50 return), which commences 2km southwest of the centre and rises to just below the peak of **Katrin** (1544m), the starting point for numerous walks. A bus from the station in Bad Ischl (free for skiers) takes you to the gondola station; to walk there, head westwards along the Esplanade and keep going for 25 minutes.

Eating, drinking and entertainment

There's a plethora of **places to eat**, with most central *Gasthöfe* offering inexpensive Mittagsmenüs. *Goldener Ochs*, on Grazerstrasse, has outdoor seating, an emphasis on meat and fish, especially veal, and a good-value Tagesmenü served in elegant, surroundings. *Weinhaus Attwenger*, Léharkai 12 (closed Mon, plus Tues in winter), is an attractive, riverside chalet-style building with outdoor tables, offering the usual mid-priced Austrian staples. The *Venezia* pizzeria at Schulgasse 5a behind the church serves reliable pizza and pasta from around €6, while the *Heurigen Stöckl* by the Kurpark has a pleasant garden and even cheaper pizza. For top-notch dining, head for the *Villa Schratt*, 1.5km along the road to St Gilgen at Steinbruch 43 (reservations advised: ☎06132/27647; closed Tues & Wed), in the former villa of Franz-Josef's mistress, with the likes of pineapple & chilli soup with crispy prawns on its €38 and €49 set menus.

For daytime **drinking**, the *Café Zauner*, Pfarrgasse 7, is the classic Koffee-Konditorei, renowned for its cake displays – especially before Christmas, when the front of the café is filled with Hansel and Gretel-style gingerbread houses. However, the elegant *Zauner's* on the Esplanade is the nicer of the two in which to linger, and does full meals as well as cake. For an authentically smoky, Viennese-style Kaffeehaus, head for *Café Ramsauer*, at Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Str 8.

Skiing

***Schifahren*, or skiing, is one of the first words an Austrian infant utters, and soon after they've learnt to say it they'll be out on the snow: the next generation of potential Olympic champions hoping to join past masters like Sailer, Klammer and Mayer. Snowboarding is popular too, rivalling skiing in many places and injecting new vigour into resorts. Austria caters for both sports to an extraordinary extent, with over 3500 lifts dotting the country. Most are seamlessly organized and rise from pretty base villages, complete with onion-domed churches and jovial après-ski.**

Downhill skiing ▲

Child learning to ski ▼

The scene

Austria's many ski resorts are generally small and usually tagged onto old Alpine villages; mega-resorts are rare. Yet they all offer solid infrastructure and most have access to a sizeable ski terrain by clubbing together with nearby resorts – using interconnected lift systems and efficient bus networks – to offer several valleys under a single pass. The season generally lasts from early December to mid-April, but many resorts lie at relatively low altitudes, making snow unreliable. Bigger resorts have snowmaking equipment to compensate when necessary and snow is guaranteed on several glaciers, but booking late when conditions are favourable can be a good tactic.

The resorts

Most of Austria is only a day-trip away from a ski slope, and even the flatlands around Vienna are within easy access of resorts like **Ötscher** and **Stuhleck-Semmering**. But the resorts that lure foreign holidaymakers are mostly in and immediately around Tyrol. Getting there generally entails flying into Munich, Salzburg or Innsbruck, or taking the overnight train to Munich, and then travelling on. **Innsbruck** itself makes an excellent base for a clutch of nearby ski areas (see p.481), if staying in an upbeat and attractive medieval town, where non-skiers will find plenty to do and the nightlife is excellent, is more of a draw than slope-side convenience.

But for a dedicated ski holiday Austria's best and most rounded resort is probably the vast **Arlberg**, on the Tyrol–Vorarlberg border. Its high altitude almost guarantees good snow and the terrain truly has something for everyone, including many

of Austria's most challenging runs and best off-piste action. Energetic **St Anton** is the most popular and busy base; **Lech** and **Zürs** offer ritzier and more sedate alternatives respectively.

Just south of the Arlberg, the **Silvretta** and **Montafon** mountains may be less famous but have almost equally impressive conditions. The big resort in the former is **Ischgl**, whose high-altitude ski area is excellent for snowboarders looking for wide pistes to carve and a fun terrain park. The Montafon resorts are more modest but particularly warrant a look by those trying to escape the ski-package mayhem, as do the resorts dotting the **Bregenzerwald** to the north.

Lying three valleys east of the Silvretta range, the **Öztal** offers more fine skiing. The town of **Sölden** is the most obvious base, close to a fine thermal springs complex, but the well-balanced package destinations of **Obergurgl** and **Hochgurgl** at the bleak valley head are deservedly popular too.

The other main concentration of Tyrolean resorts is east of Innsbruck, and includes quaint **Kitzbühel** which is as famous for breeding world champions as it is for being an exclusive resort. It's ideal for intermediates who fancy skiing between several local villages; high society big-spenders do tend to congregate here, driving up the prices, but there's little real social exclusivity about the place.

Less charming, but every bit as popular and well-rounded, are the **Zillertal** resorts, where **Mayrhofen** provides the main base. It's rather busy and touristy, so the mammoth but less demanding **Ski Welt** based around **Söll** and **Ellmau** is worth investigating as a quieter alternative. Other options in the region include the small ski area of the cosy and postcard-pretty

▲ Chalet at night

▼ Tyrol

Cross-country skiing, Tyrol ▲

Mountain restaurant ▼

Alpbach and inexpensive and family-friendly **Wildschönau**.

Austria's remaining big winter-sports draw-cards lie just west of Tyrol in the **Salzburgerland**. Close to Kitzbühel, expansive **Saalbach–Hinterglemm** has an excellent layout for mixed-ability groups wanting to ski together, and is ideal for snowboarders. Almost adjacent is the attractive lakeside resort of **Zell am See**, whose layout is awkward for beginners but offers everyone else plenty, including glacier skiing in nearby **Kaprun**, where snow is guaranteed whatever the conditions elsewhere. A little further east and slightly more convenient for gateway city Salzburg are the two dozen resorts which have banded together to form the vast **Ski Amadé** area. Its size and variety allows every skier or snowboarder to find their niche: **Schladming** is particularly well set-up for beginners while **Badgastein** comes with the added bonus of excellent spa facilities.

Après-ski

Justifiably characterized as a land of jolly inns, foaming beer mugs and rousing accordion music, Austria has an **après-ski** scene that often starts mid-afternoon and can last well into the night. But your choice of resort will determine the experience: in laid-back, traditional villages like Alpbach après-ski tends to be confined to hotel-bars where limbs are rested in front of crackling fires whilst you drink *Jägertee*, a rum-laced spice tea. In larger towns and resorts with more indiscriminate tourist development, bars and discos are thick on the ground. Badgastein, Ischgl, Saalbach-Hinterglem, Sölden, Söll, St Anton and Zell am See are all very lively, as is high-society favourite Kitzbühel.

For night-time drinking, the *Stehbeisl* on Auböckplatz is a convivial wine bar open until 2am, while the *K.u.K Hofbeisl* is a long, narrow cocktail bar that gets livelier the further back you go.

Music festivals

Bad Ischl's impressive musical pedigree is remembered in the annual **Lehár Festival** (Ⓦwww.leharfestival.at), which runs through July and August. Its programme centres on one major work by Johann Strauss, Oskar Straus, Franz Lehár or Emmerich Kálmán, plus a lesser known work. Tickets (from around €25) are available from the Kartenbüro in the Kurhaus (June Mon–Fri 9am–3pm; July & Aug Mon–Sat 9am–6pm; on performance days until performance commences; Ⓣ06132/23839).

From late June to early September, waltz music and operetta tunes are performed by the **Kurorchester** and others several times weekly, either in the Kurhaus, the Kurpark, the Trinkhalle or the *Café Zauner* on the Esplanade. There is also a nostalgia-tinged concert and other events to mark the emperor Franz-Josef's birthday in August. The tourist office will have details.

Traunsee

Traunsee owes much of its allure to the rugged grey mountains that dominate from the east – the Erlakogel, Rötelspitze and, most majestic of all, the classically craggy **Traunstein** (1691m). In contrast to its surroundings, **Ebensee**, at the southern end of the lake and the first town you reach from Bad Ischl, is a workaday industrial town, with one of the Salzkammergut's best cable car rides as compensation. The main road and the rail line hug the western shore, where **Traunkirchen** and **Altmünster** stand out amongst the numerous resorts. At the northern end of the lake lies **Gmunden**, the biggest lakeside resort in the region, and a place with some charm despite the heavy traffic that ploughs through the centre. From Gmunden you can gain access to the peaceful, mountainous eastern shore of the lake.

Resorts along the western shore are accessible by short hops on the Attnang-Puchheim to Stainach-Irdning **railway**. Gmunden can also be reached on a narrow-gauge line from Vorchdorf-Eggenberg, which you can get to from Lambach on the main Vienna–Salzburg line. In fine weather, **lake steamers** (Easter–Oct 4 daily; mid-May to Sept 6–10 daily; July & Aug 8–11 daily; Ⓦwww.traunseeschiffahrt.at) link the western resorts and the more remote spots on the eastern shore.

Ebensee and around

EBENSEE straddles the River Traun at the point where it flows into the lake. There's a perfectly serviceable lakefront, with a yacht club and Strandbad, but Ebensee is primarily industrial, the nerve centre of the local salt industry, its surrounding hillsides scarred by quarrying. Nevertheless, there's classic lakes-and-mountains scenery close by and it's worth stopping off to visit the engrossing history museum and KZ Ebensee.

Ebensee concentration camp – KZ Ebensee

In November 1943, the Nazis established a **concentration camp** outside Ebensee, which became one of the largest satellite camps serving Mauthausen (see p.230). In less than two years, around 27,000 prisoners passed through; more

than 8000 died. Inmates of **KZ Ebensee** were put to work blasting tunnels into the nearby mountain of Seeberg (1140m) so that the V2 missile testing centre from Peenemünde on the Baltic could be relocated away from Allied air raids. In the end, the tunnels were used instead for fuel production and to manufacture automotive components. Nothing remains of the camp, except its gateway, incongruous amid the placid suburbia of Finkerleiten. Signs direct you from the bundesstrasse to the **KZ-Friedhof**, where national memorials and touching individual tributes commemorate the victims. Five minutes' walk away in one of the underground galleries is the **KZ-Gedenkstollen (**May to mid-June Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; mid-June to Sept Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €3), where a small but harrowing exhibition recounts the camp's grim history. The temperature is a constant eight degrees Celsius, so take warm clothing. In the centre of Ebensee next to the church, the **Zeitgeschichte Museum Ebensee** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €4) tells the tortured story of the Austrian Republic from 1918, when the monarchy disintegrated, to 1955, when Allied forces withdrew. The museum casts an unwavering gaze over 1930s Austro-fascism, the Nazi period and the postwar myth of Austria as the Nazis' first victim.

Feuerkogel, Offensee and Langbathsee

Ebensee's biggest draw is the **Feuerkogel-Seilbahn** (mid-May to Oct & mid-Dec to late March 8.30am–5pm; €17 return), a cable-car that departs from the western fringes of town, on Langbathseestrasse. In winter, there's 12km of mostly easy skiing on the 1625m **Feuerkogel**; in summer, the cable car deposits you on a ski-run-ravaged alpine meadow below the summit where there are several places to eat while enjoying the views. The descent to Ebensee takes about two and a half hours, or you can continue west to the **Grosser Höllkogel** (1862m), the highest mountain in the Höllengebirge range, and about two and a half hours' walk from the Feuerkogel.

If it's hot, you might prefer to head for one of the small lakes hidden in the nearby mountains. Seven kilometres west of Ebensee, the **Vorderer Langbathsee** is crowded with bathers in summer, though crowds thin the further you get from the car park. For a colder, quieter dip against the dramatic rocky backdrop of the Höllengebirge, continue to **Hinterer Langbathsee**, a gentle half-hour's walk through the woods. Alternatively, the slightly warmer waters of **Offensee**, 10km southeast of Ebensee, are surrounded by similarly impressive mountains, in this case the Totes Gebirge. None of the lakes are served by bus, but they are an easy cycle ride from Ebensee.

Practicalities

Ebensee **train station** is 1km inland from the lake, though if you're heading for the Feuerkogel it's better to get off at Ebensee-Landungsplatz, the station on the lakefront. Ebensee is not the most alluring place to **stay** on Traunsee, but it does have the area's only youth hostel (Ⓣ06133/6698, Ⓦwww.jutel.at; May–Oct), at Rindbachstr 27, east of the bundesstrasse and near the lake.

Ebensee – like many places in the Salzkammergut, including the Wolfgangsee villages – is enlivened by the **Glöcklerlaufen**, **festival** on the night of January 5–6 when the menfolk – clad in white, laden with cowbells and wearing enormous Lichtkappen (hats made of tissue paper illuminated from within by lanterns) – rush about the town scaring away evil spirits.

Traunkirchen

North of Ebensee, the mountains plunge straight into the lake, forcing road and rail through a series of tunnels along the western shore. Before the advent of

motorized transport, only boats could reach the tiny fishing village of **TRAUNKIRCHEN**, perched prettily on a promontory 5km up the lake. Traunkirchen's most photographed image is that of the little grey chapel on a hill clearly visible when approaching from the south. However, it's the **Pfarrkirche**, to the north, with its tiny cemetery that merits closer inspection. Handed to the Jesuits in the seventeenth century and rebuilt with a lavish Baroque interior, the church's star attraction is its **Fischerkanzel** (Fishermen's pulpit), which features a fabulous gilded fishing boat, with James and John at either end pulling in the miraculous draught of fishes (as described in Luke's gospel), and giant sea monsters swimming around in the cascade of silver seawater beneath. The pulpit is topped by a statue of the Jesuit missionary St Francis-Xavier, accompanied by multi-ethnic cherubs in gilded headdresses, and a lobster – the latter recalling the crustacean that retrieved a crucifix that the saint lost at sea on the way to Japan. Traunkirchen is the site of an annual **Corpus Christi procession**, when villagers take to the water in small boats festooned with banners, in similar fashion to the larger affair in Hallstaat (see p.449).

To get to the village, alight at the Haltestelle Traunkirchen **train station**, rather than at Bahnhof Traunkirchen which is a kilometre or so north of the village. Here you're just uphill from the centre, where there's a **tourist office** in the Gemeindeamt (July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 2–6pm; Sept–June Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–5pm; ⓣ07617/2234, ⓦwww.traunsee.at/traunkirchen) with a short selection of **private rooms**. Two **pensions** just south of the tourist office, each with its own stretch of lakefront, are the *Seepension Zimmermann* (ⓣ07617/2360; 3) and the smaller *Hofstätter* (ⓣ07617/3488, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/seepension-hofstaetter; 4). The central *Hotel Post*, overlooking the main square (ⓣ07617/2307, ⓦwww.traunseehotels.at/post; 7), is the most characterful of a trio of big hotels, with a **restaurant** serving fresh Traunsee fish.

Altmünster

North of Traunkirchen, the next place of any size is **ALTMÜNSTER**, an out-and-out resort with fine views towards the towering Traunstein on the far shore, though the pounding traffic on the main road separating the centre from the lakeside is a downside.

The village clusters around the imposing **Pfarrkirche**, with its distinctive bare stone tower topped by a broach spire. Inside, it is a strange mixture: modern entrances, low, playful Gothic vaulting in the nave, and a taller, lighter Baroque chancel. Its most treasured object, the sixteenth-century **Allerheiligenaltar** (All Saints' Altar), is hidden in a side chapel off the south porch. This lightly gilded sandstone altar features a lively melee of holy men carved in high relief, set within a gloriously ornate Renaissance frame and crowned with a Crucifixion scene. The chapel also contains the tomb of Count Herberstorff, who, during the Upper Austrian peasant wars of the 1620s, forced captured Protestant rebels to play dice for their lives – the losers were hanged.

Altmünster boasts a charming museum of bicycles and motorbikes, the **Oldtimer museum** (May, June, Sept & Oct Sat & Sun 2–5pm; July & Aug daily 10am–noon & 2–6pm; €4), near the Neoclassical Schloss Ebenzweier, just west of Marktstrasse at Maria-Theresia-Str 3. It's packed with rows of old bikes, including a wooden bicycle from 1813 with no pedals or brakes, plus a few scooters and motorcycles, and a lovely single-cylinder BMW Isetta Knutschkugel (Love Ball) bubble car, built in 1959 – a bit of a cheat since it has three wheels.

Practicalities

Altmünster's **train station** is 1km south of the village centre down Bahnhofstrasse, which connects with Marktstrasse, where you'll find the **tourist office** (May–June & Sept–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm, July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 4–7pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–noon; ⓣ07612/87181, ⓦwww.traunsee.at/altmuenster), opposite the Pfarrkirche. The office can fix you up with a **private room**, and there's also a free accommodation phone down by the main road. Good-value **hotels** include the balconied, family-run *Rittertal*, a few steps north of the Pfarrkirche at Lindenstr 7 (ⓣ07612/87131; ④), and the pension, *Schlössl am See*, an attractive nineteenth-century villa along the lake south of the centre at Don-Alfonso-Weg 9 (ⓣ07612/87136, ⓦwww.schloessl-am-see.at; open May–Sept; ③). Altmünster's lakeside **campsite** (ⓣ07612/89313, ⓦwww.campingfuehrer.at; May–Sept) has good views but suffers from traffic noise.

For **food**, the cozy *Gasthof Reiberstorfer*, Maximilianstr 2 (ⓣ07612/87338) offers a two-course tagesmenü at €9.60; the restaurant at the *Hotel Altmünsterhof*, Ackerweg 2, serves standard Austrian fare at low prices while the *Pizzeria Toskana*, opposite the hotel at Marktstr 1 (eves only), has inexpensive pizzas, pasta dishes and kebabs. The *Stau* next door is a lively, late place for a **drink**, as is *Bierwandl*, at the *Hotel Altmünsterhof* (May–Oct only until 3am).

Gmunden

Self-confident resort architecture sets the tone of **GMUNDEN**, the only fully fledged lakeside town in the Salzkammergut, for though it accrued wealth over the centuries through its role in the salt trade, in the nineteenth century it became one of the region's most popular resorts, boasting a guest list to rival that of Bad Ischl, including such luminaries as Kaiser Wilhelm II, Tsar Nicholas of Russia, Franz Schubert and Béla Bartók. Nowadays, Gmunden has a well-established ceramic industry, and remains a pleasant, rather upmarket resort, though nothing else in the town quite lives up to the magnificent lakefront panorama, and the traffic can be oppressive.

▲ Seeschloss Ort Gmunden

Arrival, information and accommodation

Trains on the Attnang-Puchheim to Stainach-Irdning line stop at Gmunden's **Hauptbahnhof**, 2km northwest of the centre; a **tram** runs from here (every 30min; pay the driver) to Franz-Josefs-Platz near the lakefront; if you miss it, turn left out of the station, bear right, then carry on for about twenty minutes to reach the centre. Trains from Lambach, via Vorchdorf-Eggenberg, arrive at the **Seebahnhof** on the eastern bank of the Traun, whence it's a five-minute walk across the Traunbrücke to the centre.

The big modern **tourist office** is at the western end of the Esplanade close to Schloss Orth at Toscanapark 1 (May–June & Sept–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–4pm; July & Aug Mon–Fri 8am–8pm, Sat & Sun 10am–7pm; Nov–April Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–1pm; ⓣ07612/74451, ⓦwww.traunsee.at/gmunden) and has a short list of **private rooms** – a particularly enticing option here, since Gmunden's **hotels** are expensive by Salzkammergut standards.

Freisitz Roith Traunsteinstr 87 ⓣ07612/64905, ⓦwww.schlosshotel.at. Full-on seventeenth-century chateau, with very comfortable rooms and its own lakeside terrace, 1.5km southeast of the town centre. 9

Keramikhotel Goldener Brunnen Traungasse 10 ⓣ07612/64431-0, ⓦwww.goldenerbrunnen.at. Probably the best-value old-town option, a comfortable place whose modernized rooms have en-suite facilities and TV. 5

Seehotel Schwan Rathausplatz 8 ⓣ07612/63391, ⓦwww.seehotel-schwan.at. Smart, if slightly old-fashioned town centre pile offering all the usual creature comforts. Some rooms have balconies and lake views. 7

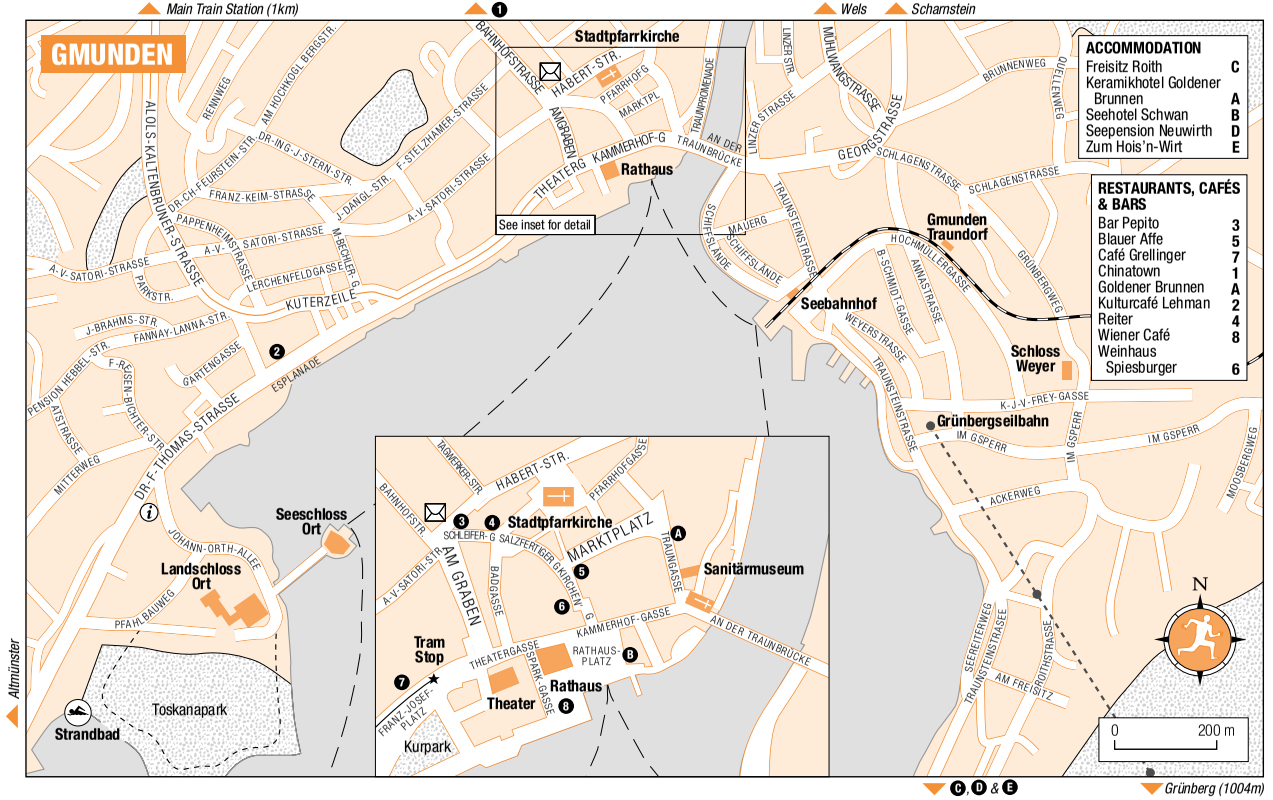
Seepension Neuwirth Traunsteinstr 149 ⓣ07612/63631. A modern chalet-style building 3km south of the town centre, in a pleasant location along the quieter eastern shore of the lake. Open May–Oct. 3

Zum Hois'n-Wirt Traunsteinstr 277 ⓣ07612/77333, ⓦwww.hoisnwirt.at. Good-value Gasthof some 5km down the eastern shore in a beautiful setting, a short walk from the lake ferry pier at Ramsau. 6

The town centre

Gmunden spreads along the lake's northern shore with its centre at the point where the River Traun flows out of the lake. The central lakefront is occupied by the spacious **Rathausplatz**, with fine views over the wooded Grünberg and rocky Traunstein. The square is overlooked by Gmunden's pistachio-coloured **Rathaus**, whose ceramic glockenspiel (summer hourly 10am–5pm & 7pm; winter 10am, noon, 2, 4 & 5pm) plays classical ditties on the 24 Meissen porcelain bells housed within its central loggia. A list of the day's tunes is posted up outside the Rathaus door.

Gmunden's tiny **Altstadt** lies north of the Rathaus, its narrow lanes winding up to the onion-domed **Stadtpfarrkirche**. The church's main altar features a life-size sculptural group representing the *Adoration of the Magi*, a Baroque ensemble of heightened drama, carved by Thomas Schwanthaler, the artist responsible for the unusual double altar at St Wolfgang (see p.430). Outside, late-Gothic frescoes of St Christopher and the Last Judgement have been clumsily restored. The most enjoyable of Gmunden's museums is the Klo & So ("Klo" is a "loo") or **Sanitärmuseum** (May–Oct Tues–Sat 10am–noon & 2–5pm, Sun 10am–noon; €4.20), in the Pepöckhaus, Traungasse 4. The first room has nineteenth-century chamber pots disguised as cushioned stools or a pile of books, one housing a convenient section for storing old newspapers to use as toilet paper. Further on there are some beautiful turn-of-the-twentieth-century porcelain *pissoirs* and a tin enema syringe. There are more sanitary goodies upstairs including the empress Elisabeth's bidet and Franz-Josef's stained water-closet from one of the alpine huts he used.


GMUNDEN
Main Train Station (1km)
Wels
Scharnstein
Stadtpfarrkirche
Rathaus
See inset for detail
Gmunden Traundorf
Seebahnhof
Schloss Weyer
Grünbergseilbahn
Seeschloss Ort
Landschloss Ort
Strandbad
Toskanapark
Tram Stop
Theater
Kurpark
Sanitärmuseum
Altmünster
Grünberg (1004m)
C, D & E
N
0
200 m
ACCOMMODATION
Freisitz Roith C
Keramikhotel Goldener Brunnen A
Seehotel Schwan B
Seepension Neuwirth D
Zum Hois'n-Wirt E
RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS & BARS
Bar Pepito 3
Blauer Affe 5
Café Grellinger 7
Chinatown 1
Goldener Brunnen A
Kulturcafé Lehman 2
Reiter 4
Wiener Café 8
Weinhaus Spiesburger 6

Ort

The leafy **Esplanade** runs southwest from the town centre along the lakefront past ice-cream vendors and a yacht club before reaching the peninsula that is home to the seventeenth-century **Landschloss Ort**, built by Count Herberstorff (instigator of the notorious Frankenburg dice game – see p.444) and subsequently owned by the endearingly flaky **Archduke Johann Salvator** (see box below). A Rococo fountain can be glimpsed in the Schloss's courtyard (now a forestry training centre), but most visitors head straight for the wooden footbridge, which leads to the fifteenth-century **Seeschloss Ort** offshore.

This picturesque Schloss forms the centrepiece of a successful German TV series, *Schlosshotel Orth*. You can admire the two-tier arcading in the triangular inner courtyard, and there's a shop and restaurant. South of Schloss Ort, paths continue to Gmunden's Art Deco **Strandbad**.

Schloss Weyer and the Grünberg

Anyone with a passion for porcelain should visit **Schloss Weyer** (May–Sept Tues–Fri 10am–noon & 2–5.30pm, Sat 10am–1pm, €7.50), a delightfully secluded little Renaissance chateau 1km east of the river, at the eastern (inland) end of Freygasse. Its collection of Meissen porcelain includes items that belonged to Catherine the Great and Madame Pompadour.

The main draw on the eastern side of town, however, is the **Grünbergseilbahn** (daily: April–June, Sept & Oct 9am–5pm; July & Aug 9am–6pm; winter season mid-Dec to Feb; €11.50 return), a cable car which rises to the upper flanks of the rounded, wooded mountain of **Grünberg** (1004m). At the top you're treated to an expansive panorama of Traunsee. A network of trails leads you back down the mountain in an hour or so, or further south via the Laudachseedown to Hois'n or Ramsau on the lake's shore (3hr). If you're keen to ascend the **Traunstein** (1691m) this way, you have to approach the mountain from Mairalm to the south.

Archduke Johann Salvator

A nephew of Emperor Franz-Josef, **Archduke Johann Salvator** (1852–90) was a liberal-minded, romantic, somewhat excitable Habsburg who fell foul of the rule that forbade family members from displaying any real independence. His problems started with an article he wrote calling for reform in the imperial artillery. As a result he was sidelined at court and exiled to Linz to run a garrison.

Eager to escape provincial army life, Salvator suggested himself as a candidate for the Bulgarian throne following the abdication of Alexander Battenberg in 1886. After his candidacy was withdrawn on the orders of his exasperated uncle, Salvator promoted the cause of vain German aristo (and future king of Bulgaria) Ferdinand von Saxe-Coburg. Consumed by enthusiasm for the Bulgarian cause (the Balkan state was at loggerheads with Turkey and Russia at the time, and under constant threat of invasion), Salvator next attempted to join its army, but was refused on the basis that the enlistment of a Habsburg would disrupt Austria's efforts to bring peace to the region.

Seeing this as another personal slight, Salvator severed his links with the imperial family, renounced his title, adopted the name Johann Orth and married dancer Milly Stubel, of whom the court strongly disapproved. The death of Crown Prince Rudolf at Mayerling (see p.203) deprived Salvator-Orth of his last real friend at court, precipitating his decision to emigrate. In 1890 he set off with his bride for South America, in a self-captained sailing ship that went missing somewhere in the South Atlantic.

Eating, drinking and entertainment

The restaurant at the *Goldener Brunnen* offers excellent-value Austrian **food** including some veggie options, with outdoor seating out back. Inexpensive Austrian fare is also available at the *Weinhaus Spiesburger*, Kirchengasse 3 (eves only), which stays open until 2am. *Chinatown*, Bahnhofstr 16, offers reasonable Far Eastern food in a smart setting, with a good-value €5.20 lunch menu. Slightly further afield, the restaurant of *Zum Hois'n Wirt* (see p.446) is the place to eat fresh local trout.

The most famous turn-of-the-twentieth-century **Kaffeehaus** is the small, old-fashioned *Café Grellinger*, right by the tram terminus at Franz-Josef-Platz 6; the *Wiener Café* in the Hotel Austria on the lakefront has splendid views and an authentic Viennese atmosphere. Further along the Esplanade, the *Kulturcafé Lehman*, at number 27, is a stylish palm-filled café-bar with live music and a garden. Two popular bars in the town centre are the *Blauer Affe*, Kirchengasse 8, and *Bar Pepito*, Am Graben 16 (closed Sun), a cellar-bar open until 4am.

From mid-July to early September, Gmunden's **Festwochen** cultural programme ensures a varied diet of jazz and classical music, cinema, theatre and literary readings in a variety of venues around town. Contact the tourist office for information.

Hallstättersee

The fjord-like **Hallstättersee**, 12km south of Bad Ischl, is the most spectacular of all the Salzkammergut's lakes, a sombre beauty where the sheer, towering mountains crowd in on all sides to ensure that for much of the year the sun leaves the main tourist centre, Hallstaat, by lunchtime. **Hallstaat** itself is one of the most photogenic and rewarding destinations in the region, with a worthwhile museum and a famous show-mine. **Obertraun** at the southern end of the lake provides access to the **Dachstein caves**, one of the most visited attractions in the region, and is also a good spot for a swim.

Buses from Bad Ischl follow the main road down the western side of the lake towards Hallstaat (generally with a change of bus at Gosaumühle), while **trains** from Bad Ischl run along the eastern shore (where boats ferry passengers across to Hallstaat; see below), pausing at Obertraun before trundling on east to Bad Aussee.

Hallstaat and around

Hallstaat occupies a dramatic position on the western shores of Hallstättersee at the base of a precipitous mountainside. The shoreline is so narrow that the rail line is confined to the opposite side of the lake, and disembarking the train at Hallstaat station and being ferried across to the village is one of the most evocative experiences that Austria has to offer. Hallstaat also has a superb historical pedigree: salt has been been mined in the mountains above the lake since Neolithic times, while the wealth of the area's archeological finds is so great that the name "Hallstaat" has entered academic terminology to denote the Celtic culture that blossomed in central Europe during the early Iron Age (800–500 BC).

Hallstaat's other claim to fame is the **Fronleichnahm** (Corpus Christi) procession, which takes place in the late spring. The procession begins at the Pfarrkirche, moves down to the main square and then takes to the water as everyone boards boats bound for a small chapel on the eastern side of the lake. All available boats

The Hallstaat culture

It's not known precisely when the Celts came to **Hallstaat**, although Celtic influences are apparent in burial sites dating back to the fourth century BC. We owe much of our knowledge of the period to the efforts of Dr Johann Georg Ramsauer, an amateur archeologist (he was the works manager at the salt mine), who began systematic exploration of the grave fields in the Salzbergtal above the town in 1846, uncovering more than a thousand graves in the ensuing eighteen years.

These finds indicated that accompanying the deceased on their journey to the afterlife were foodstuffs, elegantly fashioned pottery, exquisitely wrought bronze horse bits, and iron swords and daggers. Other discoveries in the Salzbergtal revealed that the salt-miners of the period were using iron picks.

Similar graves were subsequently unearthed throughout Austria, the Rhine Valley, France and northern Spain, demonstrating that an iron-bearing culture was spreading across much of Europe between the seventh and fifth centuries BC. It's not known what role the rulers of Iron Age Hallstaat played in this period of expansion – although they undoubtedly enjoyed the profits of a salt trade that stretched from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Catastrophic landslides in the fourth century BC devastated the valley at the entrance to the mine and brought an end to its prosperous culture; two centuries later, the Celts of the Noric Kingdom came into contact with the Roman Empire; under Emperor Augustus, the kingdom was incorporated into the Empire in 15 BC.

are pressed into service, including several of the traditional Fuhr, sharp-prowed boats propelled by a single paddle at the stern, rather like a punt. A few of them still ply for hire from the wooden boathouses along the shoreline.

Arrival and information

Lake ferries are timed to coincide with trains, crossing the lake to arrive at the Schiffstation, just north of the Marktplatz. A short walk south at Seestr 169 is Hallstaat's **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm ⓣ06134/8208, ⓦwww.inneres-salzkammergut.at). The main road bypasses Hallstaat via a long tunnel; **buses** drop off at the southern end of the tunnel in the suburb of Lahn, from where it's a short walk into the village. The village centre is closed to **cars** (May–Oct daily 10am–5pm); if you're staying in the centre, you'll get a pass that opens the barriers, but you won't be able to park, and you'll have to leave via a set of traffic lights that are on a seven-minute cycle. To park, use one of the **car parks**, halfway along, or at either end of, the tunnel; with a Gästekarte displayed on your dashboard (which you obtain if you're staying at any of Hallstaat's *Gasthöfe*), you can park for free. From the more distant car park south of the village, there is a free **shuttle bus** to the Hallstaat-Lahn Schiffsstation.

Accommodation

The tourist office will check vacancies in **private rooms**, most of which are in the southern suburb of Lahn. The *Sarstein*, Gosaumühlestr 83 (ⓣ06134/8217; ❷), is a friendly lakeside **pension,** 200m north of the landing stage, while *Gasthof Bergfried*, Echerntalweg 3 (ⓣ06134/8248, ⓦwww.bergfried-Hallstaat.net.ms; ❹), offers comfy rooms with en-suite facilities and parking on site, in Lahn. *Gasthof Zauner-Seewirt*, Marktplatz 51 (ⓣ06134/8246, ⓦwww.zauner.Hallstaat.net; ❺), an evocative old inn, is among the classiest of Hallstaat's **hotels**. Hallstaat's youth hostel is the *Gasthaus Mühle*, set back from the landing stage at Kirchenweg 36 (ⓣ06134/8318; closed Nov). The *Camping Klausner-Höll* **campsite** (ⓣ06134/8322; mid-April to mid-Oct) is beautifully situated at the beginning

of the Echerntal,in Lahn, but if you want to be right by the lake, head for Obertraun (see p.452).

The Town

Though undeniably touristy, Halstatt is a very pretty village, its rustic gabled houses tumbling down steeply to the lake. The near-absence of vehicles leaves visitors free to explore the little triangular **Marktplatz**, and the surrounding lanes, in peace.

Hallstaat's most interesting church is the **Pfarrkirche** raised above the lake on a terrace north of the Marktplatz. The south portal is adorned with early sixteenth-century Calvary scenes, superbly executed by an artist from the Danube School. Inside, the most interesting of the winged altars is the late-Gothic one on the right, with its heavily gilded statuettes of the Madonna and Child flanked by St Catherine (the patron of woodcutters, on the left) and St Barbara (the patron of miners). An adjoining chapel contains the central panel of an earlier, mid-fifteenth-century altar. In the graveyard stands the small, stone **Beinhaus** (daily: July & Aug 10am–6pm; rest of the year 10am–4.30pm; €1). Due to limited space in the graveyard, the bones of the deceased were recovered from the earth once sufficient time had elapsed for complete decomposition of the body – usually ten years or so. The bones were then stored in the Beinhaus, with skulls arranged on the upper shelves and other bones stacked neatly below. Skulls were painted by the town gravedigger: male skulls decorated with oak or ivy leaves and female skulls with floral motifs; sometimes the name of the deceased was added, and a symbol of the cause of death. The Beinhaus is no longer generally used, and if someone wants to be interred there they have to make a special request. The last person buried here was a woman who died in 1983.

Many of the Iron Age finds that made the town famous can be seen in the **Museum Hallstaat** at Markt 56 (April & Oct daily 10am–4pm; May–Sept daily 9am–6pm; Nov–March Wed–Sun 11am–3pm; €7.50) in the centre of the village, where wooden mining implements, pit props and hide rucksacks used by Iron Age miners vie for attention with the delicate jewellery and ornate dagger handles retrieved from the richer graves. The museum presents a comprehensive picture of 7000 years of the history of the area, including sections on local geology, natural history, handicrafts, and the religious strife between Catholic and Protestant – in 1734, 300 Protestants from Hallstaat, Ischl & the surrounding area were forced to settle in Transylvania. Only after Joseph II's Toleranz Patent in 1781 were Protestants allowed to worship freely, and only after further liberalization were they finally able in 1863 to build their own church in the village. Labelling is in German only, so you'll need the short English language guide (€2) to get the most from your visit.

The Salzberg salt mines

Some 400m above the village is the wooded valley of the **Salzberg**, which you can reach via the Salzbergbahn funicular railway (daily: late April to mid-Sept 9am–6pm; mid-Sept to end Sept 9am–5pm; Oct 9am–4.30pm; €8.50 return). The cardiovascular alternatives are the zigzag Salzberg-Weg that sets off from the village centre, or the slightly gentler Gaiswand-Weg that begins behind the graveyard – either way it takes around an hour. The entrance to the Salzberg area is guarded by the **Rudolfsturm**, a tower built in 1284 by Rudolf I's son Duke Albrecht von Habsburg to defend the nearby **salt mines**.

Salt is still being mined here, and the brine pumped by pipe all the way to Ebensee on Traunsee. About 800m beyond the tower, a section of eighteenth-century salt workings has been opened as a show-mine. As at

Hallein (see p.400), an hour-long tour (in German with an English summary) to the **Salzbergwerk** (daily: late April to mid-Sept 9.30am–4.30pm; mid- to late Sept 9.30am–3.30pm; Oct 9.30am–3pm; €21) is a theatrical experience. First, you don protective trousers, take a rail ride to an underground lake, where you get a son et lumière, followed by an exploration of the galleries on foot and the obligatory slither to lower levels via a wooden slide. The tour makes much of the discovery in 1734 of the preserved corpse of a prehistoric man, pressed flat, almost fused with the rock, and with his tools and clothing preserved.

Eating and drinking

The perfect picnic **food** – smoked fish fresh from the lake – can be bought from the fishmonger's (Mon–Fri 8am–noon) round the corner from the tourist office. There's little to choose between the **restaurants** in the centre of the village – all offer Austrian standards augmented by fresh fish, and you only need decide if you want a place with outdoor lakeside seating or not. *Bräugasthof*, Seestr 120, has a lakeside terrace and a competitively priced range of fresh fish. Best of the pizzerias is the *Gasthof zur Mühle*. Hallstaat's **drinking** opportunities revolve around the couple of café-bars on the main square, or the folksy *Gasthof Bergfried*.

Obertraun and around

Though set back slightly from the shore, **OBERTRAUN**, at the southeastern tip of the lake, has better **beaches** (and more sunshine) than Hallstaat, with an extensive Strandbad ten minutes' walk west of the village centre down Seestrasse. Obertraun is also the departure point for cable-car excursions to the **caves** – the Rieseneishöhle and the Mammuthölle – located high on the flanks of the **Dachstein** (2995m), the snow-capped mountain that rises above the lake to the south.

If Obertraun's rustic tranquility appeals, the **tourist office** in the Gemeindeamt 500m east of the station (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5pm; summer & winter high seasons till 6pm Mon–Fri & 9am–noon Sat; ⓣ06131/351-0, ⓦwww.inneres-salzkammergut.at) offers **private rooms**, some of them in Winkl, an attractive suburb ranged along the Hallstaat road to the west. There's an HI **youth hostel** some way out of town at Winkl 26 (ⓣ06131/360, ⓦwww.jutel.at); follow the Hallstaat road, cross the bridge and turn left onto the road to the Dachstein cable car to reach it. Obertraun's shady *Camping am See* (ⓣ06131/265, ⓦwww.camping-am-see.at; May–Sept) is also in Winkl. Best places to **eat and drink** are the *Haus am See* by the Strandbad, or the *Gasthof Höllwirt* in the village centre, both offering rustic Austrian dishes.

The Dachstein caves and the Krippenstein cable car

The **Dachstein caves** (ⓦwww.dachsteinregion.at) above Obertraun are one of the most popular excursions in the Salzkammergut. There are two groups of high caves to explore: the awesome **Rieseneishöhle** (late April to early June & Sept to mid-Oct 9.20am–4pm; mid-June to early Sept 9.20am–4.30pm; €23.70 including cable car; €28.60 with Mammuthöhle and cable car), or giant ice caves, whose galleries are adorned with dramatically lit ice formations, and the **Mammuthöhle** (mid-May to early June & early Sept to mid-Oct 10.15am–2.30pm; early June to early Sept 9.15am–3pm; €23.70 or combined ticket with Rieseneishöhle as above), or mammoth caves (the latter a reference to the system's size rather than the presence of any prehistoric animal), which

lack the ice, but include the so-called "midnight cathedral", where abstract, psychedelic images are projected onto the cavern walls to dramatic effect. Down below in the valley, the **Koppenbrüllerhöhle** (late April to early Nov 10am–4pm; €7.70) are the youngest of the Dachstein caves, a giant natural spring reached easily on foot by a signposted walk from Obertraun station.

To get to the high caves, you must either walk up from Obertraun (2hr 30min) or take the **Dachsteinbahn** (late April–Oct), the cable car that begins southeast of Obertraun village. To reach the cable car by car follow the signposts off the Hallstaat road; on foot, pass through the centre of the village from the train station until you see the signposted path (30min). The cable-car journey is itself a worthwhile excursion, offering stunning views of Hallstättersee below; to reach the caves, get off at the middle station, **Schönbergalm** (€14.40 return if you *don't* visit the caves), from which the caves are a fifteen-minute walk. A second cable car climbs from Schönbergalm to the 2109-metre peak of **Krippenstein** (late July to mid-Sept: €20.60 return with Schörnbergalm), where you can grab a bite to eat, walk in the alpine pastures and test your vertigo from the "5fingers" viewing platform. Stay overnight at the *Lodge am Krippenstein* (Ⓣ06135/8808). A third cable car descends from here to the 1750m Gjadalm (late July to mid-Sept; €22.20 return). The cable cars re-open in mid-December to serve skiers and snowboarders; peak winter season continues until the end of March.

Gosau

It's worth making the 10km side-trip along the road west from Gosaumühle north of Hallstaat to **GOSAU**, a pleasantly scattered alpine settlement amid pastureland with the spectacularly jagged peaks of the Dachstein range to the south. The village has a **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–6pm; Ⓣ06136/8295, Ⓦwww.inneres-salzkammergut.at) at the chief road junction, which can help with **accommodation**, from **private rooms** or **hostel** beds to a room in a comfortable **pension** like the *Kirchenwirt* (Ⓣ06136/8196, Ⓦwww.kirchenwirt-peham.at; 3), near the church. Ten **buses** go to Gosau from Bad Ischl and Gosaumühle on the Hallstaat daily, and it's worth enquiring at the tourist office about the **Bummelzug** (late May to Oct; half day €11–13, full day €17), a tractor-hauled tramcar that ferries walkers into the hills to the accompaniment of zither music.

Five kilometres up the valley from Gosau is **Vorderer Gosausee**, the first of two lakes, where you can eat on the lakeside terrace of the *Gasthof Gosausee* (Ⓣ06136/8514; 4) and drink in the incredible views towards ice-capped mountains. From here it's a brisk walk (1hr 30min) along the lake and through woods to the **Hinterer Gosausee**, a smaller green-blue lake enclosed within a host of stunning grey peaks. At the far end of the lake is another, more modest refreshment halt, the *Hohe Holzmeisteralm*. Alternatively, take the **Gosaukammbahn** (daily: mid-May to mid-June & mid-Sept to late Oct 8.15am–4.50pm; mid-June to mid-Sept 8.15am–5.20pm; €10.70 return) to the Zwieselalm (1587m), a peak to the west, which gives still better views of (and access to) the zigzag peaks of the Gosaukamm above the lake, and head southeast towards the glacier-pitted Dachstein range. In winter the Gosaukammbahn gives access to 65km of pistes.

Gosausee is the start point for the eight-day **Dachstein Rundwanderweg**, a high altitude hut-to-hut alpine hiking route for experienced walkers that circles the Dachstein range and includes a short traverse of the glacier. Local tourist offices have information about the route.

Bad Aussee and around

BAD AUSSEE is the chief settlement in the southeastern, Styrian corner of the Salzkammergut. Another medieval salt-processing town that reinvented itself as a spa, it owed much of its nineteenth-century popularity to the visits of **Johann, Archduke of Styria**, whose love for the local postmaster's daughter Anna Plöchl (see box) was followed with intense interest by the Austrian public, adding a veneer of romance to the town's otherwise wholesome image. Bad Aussee lies between **Grundlsee** to the east, a five-kilometre-long lake overlooked by the mountains of the Totes Gebirge, and **Altauseer See** to the north, overlooked in turn by the distinctive, humpbacked Loser.

Bad Aussee is home to one of Austria's most colourful carnival customs. On **Faschingsdienstag** (Shrove Tuesday), the **Flinserln** don sequinned costumes and parade through the town to announce the coming spring. They're accompanied by top-hatted **Zacherln**, whose job it is to keep the Flinsern in order by waving pigs' bladders on the ends of sticks. Also taking to the streets are the **Drum Women**, men in nightdresses who move from inn to inn banging drums and availing themselves of free food and drink – a misogynistic celebration of men's right to booze in peace without being pestered by their womenfolk. Bad Aussee's other big folk celebration is the **Narzissenfest**, a daffodil festival straddling a weekend at the end of May.

Arrival, information and accommodation

Bad Aussee's **train station** is southwest of the centre, a twenty-minute walk up Bahnhofstrasse. The **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 9am–6pm; ⓣ03622/52323, ⓦwww.ausseerland.at), at the southern end of the Kurpark off Oppauerplatz, will fix you up with **private rooms** or a cheap pension, and offers touch-screen accommodation information and a free phone outside office hours. For all the creature comforts, try the stylish town-centre Gasthof, *Hotel Erzherzog Johann*, opposite the Kurhaus at Kurhausplatz 62 (ⓣ03622/52507; ⓦwww.erzherzogjohann.at; 9), or the attractive alpine *Villa Kristina*, slightly northwest of town at Altausseerstr 54 (ⓣ03622/52017, ⓦwww.villakristina.at; 5). There's a modern **HI hostel** about 400m southwest of the town centre at Jugendherbergsstr 148 (ⓣ03622/52238, ⓦwww.jfgh.at), with beds in four-person dorms.

The Town

Traffic blights the narrow streets of Bad Aussee's centre, which is focused on the tiny **Kurpark**, whose manicured lawns overlook the babbling confluence of the Ausseer Traun and the Grundlseer Traun. A statue in the park honours the town's great popularizer, Archduke Johann, while the modern concrete and steel **Mercedesbrücke**, which bridges the two arms of the Traun, is built in the shape of the Mercedes symbol and marks the geographical centre of Austria.

Across Hauptstrasse and uphill from the Kurpark, **Chlumeckyplatz** is the centre of the old town and site of the **Kammerhofmuseum** (Feb, April to mid-June & Oct Tues & Sat 4–6pm, Fri & Sun 10am–noon; mid-June to Sept daily 10am–noon & 3–6pm; €3), occupying a Gothic building with Renaissance additions, which once housed the administration of the local salt industry. Inside, the Kaisersaal boasts eighteenth-century frescoes showing vibrant local landscapes framed by floral designs. The museum has a small display on the story of how the Nazis came to dump forged British £5 notes

Archduke Johann

It's impossible to visit Bad Aussee without coming across reminders of **Archduke Johann** (1782–1859), one of the nineteenth century's more likeable Habsburgs, who scandalized the imperial family with his love for **Anna Plöchl**, daughter of Bad Aussee's postmaster. Although the archduke is remembered as something akin to the romantic lead in an operetta, he was a powerful figure whose reformist ideas were ultimately stymied. He was considered more capable than his brother Emperor Franz II, who consequently had him spied upon and used as a scapegoat for Habsburg failures. Johann was thus blamed for Napoleon's victory at Deutsch-Wagram in 1809, because the troops he was commanding arrived late and missed the battle. Defeat at the hands of the French had a damaging effect on Habsburg prestige, and Johann tried to reinvigorate the empire by encouraging a new, specifically Austrian identity that would unify all its subjects. However, the response among ruling circles was negative, leaving him increasingly disillusioned. A keen mountaineer who loved to hang out in the Styrian countryside in lederhosen and a huntsman's hat, the archduke preferred provincial life to the backbiting of the capital. His love for the low-born Anna, whom he met in 1819 and whose eyes he somewhat condescendingly described as of the type "which we highlanders compare to chamois", in any case ensured that he was increasingly given the cold shoulder.

Johann's relatives didn't know what to make of his sentimentality: in a family whose male children were expected to marry for dynastic reasons, romantic love was at best seen as a dereliction of duty; at worst, a sign of mental illness. Emperor Franz forbade the match on the advice of his chief minister Metternich (a staunch opponent of Johann's liberal-leaning politics), who warned that marriage to a middle-class girl would only make Johann more popular. Johann refused any compromise, moving Anna into his house – though his claim that they never shared a bed placated a skeptical Catholic hierarchy. In 1829 an exasperated emperor relented, and the couple married at Brandhof, Johann's palatial hunting lodge near Mariazell, with Anna receiving the title Baroness von Brandhofen; in 1844 she was elevated to the title Countess of Meran.

The archduke continued to avoid court if at all possible – though he played a key role in persuading Ferdinand I to abdicate in favour of the 18-year-old Franz-Josef (Johann's nephew) in 1848. In the same year, the German assembly in Frankfurt adopted Archduke Johann as its president, hoping he would serve as a liberal figure-head, but Franz-Josef persuaded Johann to step down as soon as he felt strong enough to move against him.

in Toplitzsee at the end of World War II – a fact that perhaps explains the persistent (if far-fetched) legends of Nazi gold at the bottom of the lake.

Haupstrasse heads east across the Grundlseer Traun to Meranplatz, site of the house, at no. 37, where **Anna Plöchl** grew up, and where she returned after Archduke Johann's death in 1859. Here, too, stands the Gothic **Spitalkirche** (July & Aug Mon, Wed, Thurs & Sat 10–11.30am; Sept–June Mon & Thurs 9.30–11.30am, Tues 3–5pm), stuffed full of top-notch Gothic art, reflecting the wealth of medieval Bad Aussee. The same is true of the **Stadtpfarrkirche St Paul**, further east up Kirchengasse.

Eating

Bad Aussee is richer in smart **cafés** than in **restaurants.** The restaurant at the *Erzherzog Johann* is the place for refined Austrian and Italian cuisine in elegant surroundings, with main courses from around €13; the *Ausseer Stube* next to the *Gasthof Sonne* on Hauptstrasse serves trout or roast chicken in

simpler surroundings. The social centre of Bad Aussee is the *Kurhaus Café Lewandofsky*, with its smoke-filled, light wood-panelled interior. The almost equally smart *Wiener Café Conditorei* at Ischlerstr 72 serves Ausseer Lebkuchen as well as full meals.

Grundlsee and the Drei-Seen-Tour

Four kilometres northeast of Bad Aussee, peaceful **Grundlsee** can be reached by bus or by a signposted footpath, which starts at the eastern end of town uphill from Meranplatz and heads off through the woods. Stretching along the lake's western shore, the village of **GRUNDLSEE** initially played host to nineteenth-century English fishing enthusiasts, though soon urban Austrians were seduced by its tranquil charm – Sigmund Freud, who loved to pick mushrooms in the woods above the lake, holidayed here before World War I.

For over a century the most popular excursion hereabouts has been the **Drei-Seen-Tour** or "three-lake tour" (May to early Oct daily: 10.30am, 11.45am, 1.35pm & 2.45pm; the return trip takes about 3hr; €15), which takes in Grundlsee and two smaller lakes to the east. Embarking from a pier at the west end of Grundlsee village, you're shipped to **GÖSSL**, at the eastern edge of the lake, from where you walk through the woods to secluded **Toplitzsee**. There, another boat ferries you past impressive waterfalls on the northern side of the lake. An even shorter walk brings you to **Kammersee**; source of the River Traun and too small for a boat trip, but where you have time to enjoy the view before turning back. Of course, you don't have to take the full three-lake option; you could simply have a one-hour tour of Grundlsee on its own, or bus it to Gössl, and walk to Toplitzsee for that stretch of the tour.

Grundlsee's **tourist office** (July–Aug Mon–Sat 9am–7pm; Sept–May Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm; ☎03622/8666, ⓦwww.ausseerland.at), on the main road through the village, will sort out **private rooms**, or you can sleep in style at the chic *Seehotel* (☎03622/86044, ⓦwww.seehotelgrundlsee.at; 8) on the lakeside. The *Moserer Stubn* next door offers a steak-heavy menu with mains from around €12, while *Max's Restaurant* at the *Seehotel* is the place to enjoy haute cuisine in lovely, light-flooded surroundings, with mains from around €17.

Gössl squats beside a thin stretch of shingle beach, with the usual facilities. The **campsite** (☎03622/8689, ⓦwww.campingveit.at; May–Oct) is just back from the lakefront. Grundlsee's rather expensive **HI hostel** (☎03622/8629, ⓦwww.jfgh.at), meanwhile, lies 1km southwest of Gössl, where the Bad Aussee–Gössl buses terminate.

Altausseer See and around

Buses also head 4km north from Bad Aussee to **Altausseer See**, dominated, to the east, by the grey cliff-face of the Trisselwand. At the western edge of the lake is the quiet, rustic village of **ALTAUSSEE**, which combines its roles as a spa, lake resort and winter ski centre with considerable charm; it describes itself as a *Luftkurort* – an air spa – and the wonderfully clean air is reason enough for a visit. There are several places where you can have a drink by the lake, and the odd spot amidst the trees on the north shore from which you can swim. A little boat does 45-minute round-trips of the lake in summer (ⓦwww.altausseeschiffahrt.at; €6).

There's a **tourist office** in Altaussee's Kur- und Amtshaus (July & Aug Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–7pm, Sat 9am–noon; Sept & Oct Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; Nov–June Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 2–5pm; ☎03622/71643, ⓦwww.ausseerland.at), where you can organize

a **private room**. The two lakeside **hotels** are both luxurious and expensive: *Silence-Hotel Seevilla* (☎03622/71302, ⓦwww.seevilla.at; ❾) and *Hotel am See* (☎03622/71361, ⓦwww.hotelamsee.at; ❽). The nearest you'll get to the lake on a budget is about 300m from it at the excellent *Gasthof Loser* (☎03622/71373, ⓦwww.gasthof-loser.at; ❻) or the *Gästehaus Sochor* (☎03622/71320, ⓦwww.altaussee.at/haus-sochor; ❸).

North of Altausseer See rises the bare-topped **Loser** (1838m). There's a marked path which begins in Altaussee, though you might prefer to take the postbus (July–Sept twice daily) which wends its way up the fifteen hairpin bends of the Panoramastrasse to the car park outside the *Loser Alm* – it's a toll road, so cars must pay €15 to reach the same point. From the restaurant, whose terrace enjoys fabulous views over the lake, it's an hour's walk, via tiny Augstsee (which is reached relatively easily and quickly), to the top of the Loser. There are actually two peaks, but head for the one with the cross on it (which is the summit), as it has the best views, as far as Wolfgangsee and the Schafberg on a clear day.

Tours of the **Salzbergwerk** (daily: May–June & mid-Sept to Oct 9am–3pm; July to mid-Sept 9am–4pm; €14.50), 3km northwest of Altaussee, begin with a long walk deep into the mountain, followed by a slide down to the lower galleries. The Altaussee mine's claim to fame is that it was used by the Nazis in World War II to stash artworks from all over occupied Europe. There's also a stage in the middle of the underground lake, established on the initiative of Altaussee-born Klaus Maria Brandauer, Austria's most distinguished actor, though nowadays its use is limited to a son et lumière presentation.

Travel details

Trains

Check ⓦwww.oebb.at for the latest details.

Attnang-Puchheim to: Altmünster (hourly; 20–25min); Bad Aussee (hourly; 1hr 30min); Bad Ischl (hourly; 50min–1hr); Ebensee (hourly; 35–40min); Gmunden (hourly; 15min); Hallstaat (hourly; 1hr 15min–1hr 30min); Obertraun (hourly; 1hr 20min–1hr 35min); Salzburg (1–2hr; 45min–1hr 20min); Stainach-Irdning (hourly; 2hr–2hr 25min); Traunkirchen (hourly; 25min–30min); Vienna (hourly; 2hr 35min).

Bad Ischl to: Altmünster (hourly; 30–40min); Attnang-Puchheim (hourly; 55min–1hr 10min); Bad Aussee (10 daily; 35–45min); Ebensee (hourly; 20min); Gmunden (hourly; 40–50min); Hallstaat (hourly; 20–30min); Obertraun (hourly; 25–30min); Stainach-Irdning (every 2hr; 1hr 10min); Traunkirchen (hourly; 30min).

Lambach to: Vorchdorf-Eggenberg (hourly; 25min).

Salzburg to: Attnang-Puchheim (1–2hr; 45min–1hr 10min); Lambach (5 daily; 1hr 20min); Vöcklabruck (hourly; 1hr–1hr 10min); Vöcklamarkt (hourly; 45min).

Stainach-Irdning to: Altmünster (8 daily; 1hr 45min); Attnang-Puchheim (8 daily; 2hr–2hr 30min); Bad Aussee (10 daily; 35min); Bad Ischl (8 daily; 1hr 10min); Ebensee (8 daily; 1hr 30min–1hr 50min); Gmunden (8 daily; 1hr 50min); Graz (10 daily; 2hr–2hr 30min); Hallstaat (7 daily; 50min); Obertraun (8 daily; 45min); Traunkirchen (8 daily; 1hr 40min).

Vöcklamarkt to: Attersee (every 1–2hr; 30min).

Vorchdorf-Eggenberg to: Gmunden Seebahnhof (every 30min–1hr; 30min).

Buses

Check ⓦwww.postbus.at for the latest details.

Bad Aussee to: Gössl (1–7 daily; 20min); Grundlsee (1–7 daily; 10min).

Bad Ischl to: Gosau (9 daily; 45min); Salzburg (every 1–2hr; 1hr 15min–1hr 30min); St Gilgen (every 1–2hr; 40min); St Wolfgang (4–9 daily; 35min); Strobl (hourly 25min).

Hallstaat to: Obertraun (5 daily; 7min).

Mondsee to: St Gilgen (4 daily except Sun; 20min); Salzburg (1–2hr; 50min); Unterach (every 1–2hr except Sun; 20min).

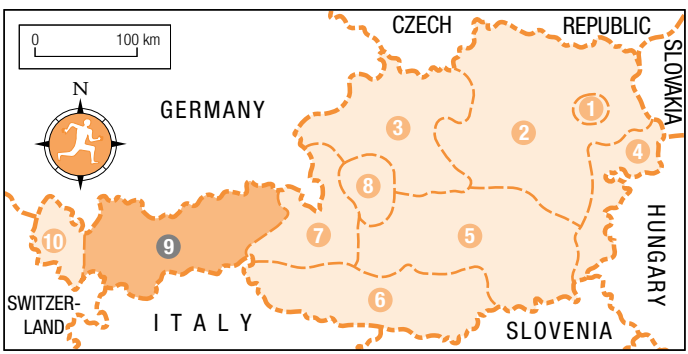
Salzburg to: Bad Ischl (hourly; 1hr 40min); Fuschl (hourly; 37min); Mondsee (hourly; 50min); St Gilgen (hourly; 45min); Strobl (hourly; 1hr 15min).

St Gilgen to: Mondsee (4 daily except Sun; 20min); Salzburg (hourly; 50min); Strobl (hourly; 17min).

Strobl to: Postalm (1 daily; 24min); St Wolfgang (hourly; 10min).

9

Tyrol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CHAPTER 9

Highlights

- **Innsbruck** Capital of the Tyrol, this fantastically outdoorsy city offers a tempting mix of mountain pursuits and high culture, all set around its medieval city centre. See p.464
- **Paragliding** One of the most exhilarating ways to see the stunning Zillertal valley. See p.494
- **Sipping beer at 3000m** Head to the top of the Tuxer Glacier for a beer with a view. See p.501
- **Auracher Löchl Weinhaus** One of the most atmospheric old inns in the Tyrol, hidden away in Kufstein's medieval streets. See p.503
- **Kitzbühel** The poshest place to ski and be seen, with a unique blend of medieval buildings, designer boutiques and bars and a kudos that nowhere else in Austria can match. See p.507
- **Zugspitze** Germany's highest mountain, straddling the Austrian border, is scaled by one of the scariest cable-car rides you're ever likely to take. See p.513
- **St Anton** Unrivalled off-piste skiing and a reputation for hedonistic nightlife make this one of Austria's most tempting winter destinations for snow-freaks and party animals alike. See p.526

▲ Innsbruck's Altstadt

9

Tyrol

A spectacular alpine playground filled with craggy peaks, verdant pastures, frothy mountain rivers and onion-domed hilltop chapels, **Tyrol** (*Tirol* in German) is picture-postcard Austria at its most vivid. Apart from a few tiny pockets of industrialization, hardly a square centimetre of the province is anything but extremely attractive. Although the mountains naturally take centre stage, there's a surprising amount of urban tourism to be savoured too: the Tyrolean capital, **Innsbruck**, is a worthy focal point – a lively and attractive place that combines urban thrills with a wide range of alpine pursuits. Around it, the historic **Inn Valley** towns of **Stams**, **Hall** and **Schwaz** all reward visits, while the resort village of **Seefeld** and the **Stubaital** both give easy access to glorious landscapes and the great outdoors.

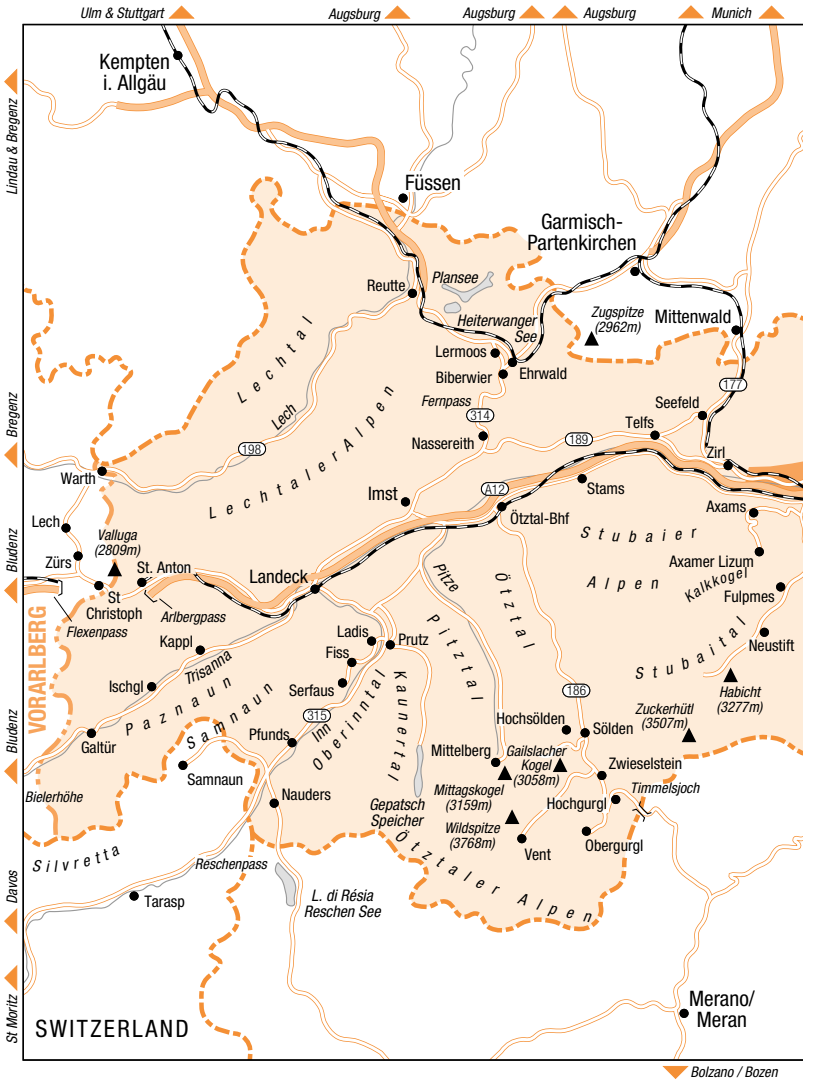
Wilder and more grandiose Tyrolean destinations lie a little further from Innsbruck, largely in set-piece alpine valleys that run into the Inn Valley. The deep, mountain-fringed **Zillertal** and **Ötztal** are among the most dramatic, and this is where you'll find the densest concentration of summer **hiking** routes. Paths are well marked, maps easy to come by, and many local tourist offices arrange guided walks – making access easy for the occasional rambler as well as the ambitious hut-to-hut enthusiast. Both summer and winter tourists are catered for in cosmopolitan ski resorts like **Kitzbühel**, **Mayrhofen** and **St Anton**, although the sheer variety of smaller resorts and out-of-the-way alpine communities ensures that there's something for everybody.

Wherever you are in the province, you'll see the imprint of a strong sense of Tyrolean identity. Tyroleans are proud of their alpine surroundings, cherishing an unspoken belief that the best mountaineers and skiers in Austria come from here. You'll spot traditional dress – lederhosen and feathered huntsmen's hats – more often here than elsewhere in the country, and uniquely Tyrolean dishes like *Gröstl*, *Schlipfkrapfen* and *Tiroler Knödel* (see p.40) dominate local restaurant menus.

Getting around the Tyrol is simple enough: all the main Inn valley towns are connected by rail, while a pretty comprehensive bus system serves the side-valleys. The system of integrated rail and bus passes operated by the Tyrolean transport authority (Verkehrsverbund Tirol or VVT; ⓦwww.vvt.at) makes travelling easy. Most useful are likely to be either a weekly Regio-Ticket (€23.80) for one of the Tyrol's twelve individual regions (including East Tyrol, see p.358); or the well-priced Tirol-Ticket (€61) for the entire network.

Some history

Having been settled by Bavarian tribes in the eighth century, Tyrol began life as a medieval dukedom centred on Meran (now Merano in Italy) on the south side of the Alps. The political centre of gravity gradually shifted northwards,



however, with the strengthening of the economic power of Inn Valley towns such as Schwaz (a gold- and silver-mining centre) and Hall (an important salt-producing town). Tyrol fell into the **Habsburg** orbit in 1363, when Duke Rudolf IV inherited it from his sister Margareta, widow of Meinhard, last of the dukes of Görz-Tirol. For the next century and a half, Tyrol was home to a regional branch of the Habsburg house, and by the time of **Sigismund the Rich** (1427–96; so named thanks to better luck than his father, Friedrich the Penniless), the area had gained a reputation for stability and prosperity, and was coveted by other members of the family as a result. In 1490, a coalition of Tyrolean nobles and Habsburg power-brokers persuaded Sigismund to bequeath

the Tyrol to his nephew **Maximilian I**, a Habsburg who lacked a significant power base despite being in line for the imperial throne (he became Holy Roman Emperor in 1493). As it turned out, possession of Tyrol was crucial to Maximilian's fortunes. Using the silver mines of Schwaz as security, he borrowed money from the financiers of Augsburg and set about paying off political opponents, establishing a modern army based on artillery, and assembling a glittering court at his chosen capital, Innsbruck.

The development of the Habsburg state bureaucracy under Maximilian eroded the traditional rights of Tyrolean peasants, driving them into open **rebellion** in 1525. Led by Michael Gaismair, the peasants were supported by

the Schwaz miners, who – solidly Protestant by this time – wanted to overturn the privileges of a grasping clergy and their aristocratic backers. After initially offering compromises, the **Archduke** (and future Austrian emperor) **Ferdinand I** engaged mercenaries to quash the uprising. Gaismair fled to Venice, while Ferdinand himself proceeded to cleanse Tyrol of Protestantism, helping to turn the province into one of the most devoutly Catholic areas of Austria – or the "**Holy Land of Tyrol**" as it has since been named by regional patriots.

Another important element of Tyrolean identity was provided by its army. During the reign of Maximilian, a piece of legislation known as the **Landlibell** of 1511 made Tyroleans responsible for securing their own borders, while exempting them from serving in other Habsburg lands – an exemption that survived until as late as 1918. As a result, Tyroleans developed their own military institutions, with the **Schützen**, or "riflemen", forming a local militia.

In the War of the Spanish Succession in 1703, the Land's defence forces defeated invading Bavarians at Landeck, adding to the myth of Tyrol's military might. When the 1805 **Treaty of Pressburg** awarded Tyrol to Bavaria, the Schützen provided patriotic local innkeeper **Andreas Hofer** with the core of a resistance movement with which he could challenge the Bavarians and their French sponsors. Subsequently dubbed the **Tyrolean War of Independence**, this heroic but doomed escapade was launched with the encouragement of a Viennese court that had no real means of providing military support. After driving Franco-Bavarian forces out three times, the Tyroleans were finally overcome by superior odds, and Hofer shot by the French in 1810. Franco-Bavarian control lasted until Napoleon's defeat in 1815, when the province was returned to the Austrian fold. Schützen rifle associations still exist in an amateur capacity, their members turning out in traditional regalia at any excuse to mount a display of Tyrolean identity.

Tyrolean patriotism was given added edge in the twentieth century by a decision to award the **South Tyrol** (Südtirol) to Italy in the aftermath of World War I. The decision paid scant regard to ethnic realities – and South Tyrol (Alto Adige to the Italians), though within Italy's border, remains to this day a predominantly German-speaking area. **East Tyrol** (Osttirol; see Chapter 6), meanwhile, was left geographically isolated from the rest of the province. Austrian membership of the European Union, and the phasing out of border controls along the Tyrolean-Italian frontier, have helped to bring the inhabitants of all the Tyrols closer together in the last decade, healing some of the wounds inflicted by enforced partition.

Innsbruck

Sprawling beneath the Nordkette mountain ridge, **INNSBRUCK** is Austria's only major urban centre with high Alps on its doorstep. If you want to visit museums in the morning, walk up mountains in the afternoon and bar-hop into the early hours, you'd be hard pushed to find a more convenient place. Skiing is big news here – and hosting the winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976 provided the city with a wealth of sporting and tourist facilities. But for those

who just want a taste of history, Innsbruck's compact centre – a classic Austrian hybrid of the Gothic and Baroque – invites aimless strolling. It's also a thriving commercial centre that depends on more than just tourism, and has a down-to-earth, unpretentious air quite different to that of western Austria's other main urban centre, self-possessed Salzburg. Innsbruck is the nation's third biggest university city after Vienna and Graz, its sizeable student population helping to support a range of cultural and nightlife options wide enough to suit most tastes. With regular **trains** whizzing you along the Inn Valley, Innsbruck's also a good base from which to explore the Tyrol more widely.

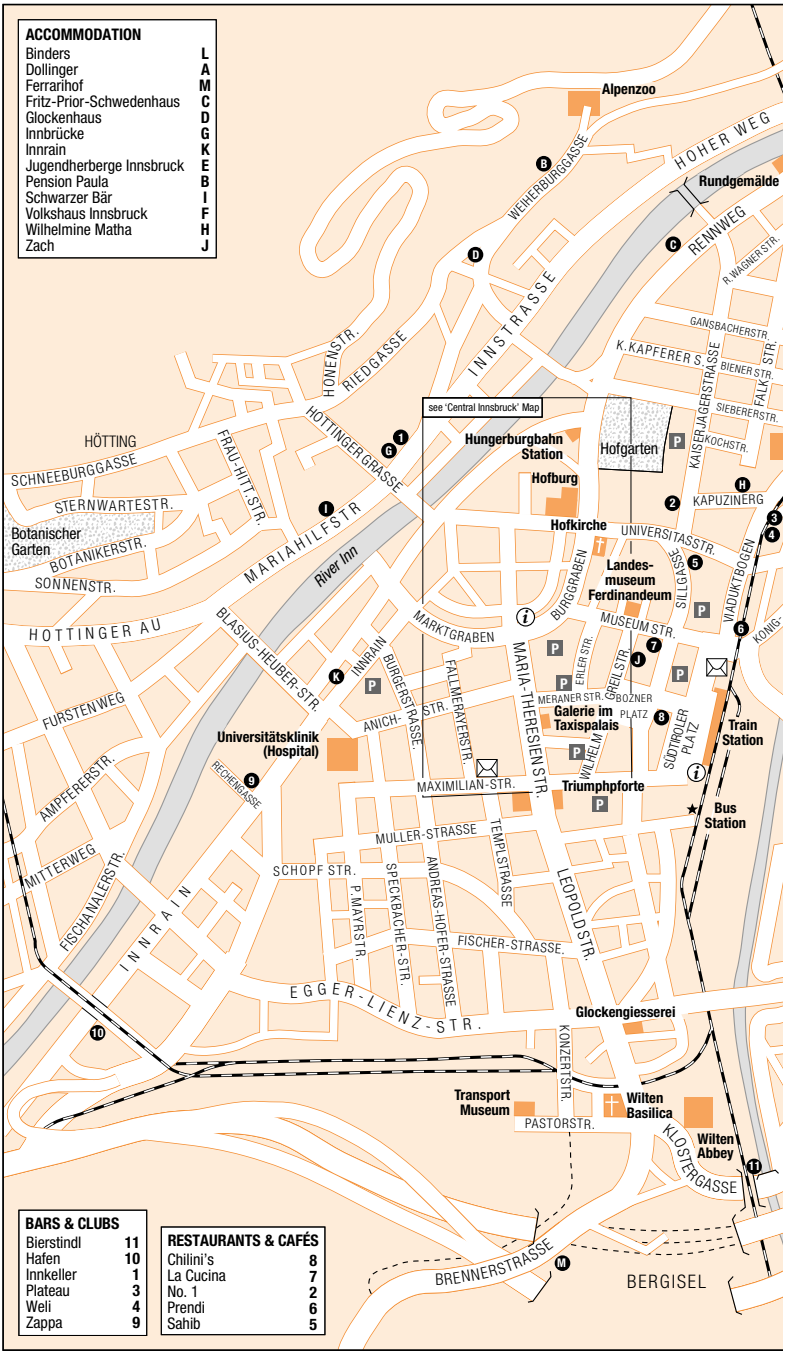
Some history

Although an important trading post on the River Inn since Celtic times, Innsbruck was in the shadow of wealthier Tyrolean centres like Hall, Schwaz and Meran until the 1380s, when **Duke Leopold III** began to hold court on the spot now occupied by the Hofburg. His great grandson **Maximilian I** made Innsbruck his imperial capital in the 1490s, catapulting a provincial alpine town into the heart of European politics and culture. Innsbruck still bears the stamp of Maximilian's era: a fine ensemble of medieval buildings in the centre augmented by the **Goldenes Dachl** ("Golden Roof"), built to add splendour to Maximilian's court, as well as the imperial mausoleum in the **Hofkirche**, an ostentatious shrine to the Habsburg dynasty, and **Schloss Ambras**, home to the eccentric art collection of Maximilian's great-grandson, **Archduke Ferdinand II**, all attest to the Habsburgs' claim to the city. Although the ducal capital of the Tyrol remained at Meran until the 1860s, the dynasty's connection with Innsbruck remained strong. Empress **Maria Theresia** was a frequent visitor, adding a Baroque veneer to the city by rebuilding the **Hofburg**, and erecting the **Triumphpforte** in honour of her son, Archduke Leopold II. Pro-Habsburg patriotism made Innsbruck the obvious centre of Tyrolean resistance to Franco-Bavarian occupation during the Napoleonic wars, and it briefly served as resistance leader **Andreas Hofer**'s capital during his short-lived reign of Tyrol in 1809. Modern-day Innsbruck is an engaging paradox: conservative and traditionalist in its attachment to Tyrolean values, it's also one of Austria's most cosmopolitan centres – largely due to its position on the increasingly busy transport routes between Germany and Italy.

Arrival, information and getting around

Innsbruck's **airport** (☎0512/22525) is at Kranebitten, 4km west of the centre. Bus F (€1.70) runs into town to the train station every thirty minutes. A taxi will set you back around €15. The main **train station** is on Südtirolerplatz on the eastern fringes of the centre, a mere ten minutes' walk from the **Altstadt**, at the city's core. The **bus station** is immediately south of the train station.

The main **tourist office** is on the fringes of the Altstadt at Burggraben 3 (daily 9am–6pm; ☎0512/59850, ⓦwww.innsbruck.info). There's another branch on the train station forecourt (daily 9am–7pm), and an information kiosk at the Innsbruck-Süd exit of the autobahn. The central tourist office has Internet access and sells concert and public-transport tickets, as well as the **Innsbruck card** (24hr €24; 48hr €29; 72hr €34), a useful investment if you're planning a day or two of heavy-duty sightseeing. It allows free admission to most of the town's attractions, free use of public transport, along with the handy


ACCOMMODATION
Binders L
Dollinger A
Ferrarihof M
Fritz-Prior-Schwedenhaus C
Glockenhaus D
Innbrücke G
Innrain K
Jugendherberge Innsbruck E
Pension Paula B
Schwarzer Bär I
Volkshaus Innsbruck F
Wilhelmine Matha H
Zach J
Airport & Camping Kranebitten
Innsbruck West
Stubai
Alpenzoo
HOHER WEG
Rundgemälde
WEIHERBURGGASSE
RENNWEG
R. WAGNER STR.
GANSBACHERSTR.
K. KAPFERER S.
BIENER STR.
FALK STR.
SIEBERERSTR.
KOCHSTR.
KAISERJAGERSTRASSE
INNSTRASSE
HONENSTR.
RIEDGASSE
HÖTTING
SCHNEEBURGGASSE
STERNWARTESTR.
FRAU-HITT.STR.
HOTTINGERGRASSE
see 'Central Innsbruck' Map
Hungerburgbahn Station
Hofgarten
Hofburg
KAPUZINERG
Botanischer Garten
BOTANIKERSTR.
SONNENSTR.
MARIAHILFSTR
River Inn
Hofkirche
UNIVERSITASSTR.
Landes-museum Ferdinandeum
SILLGASSE
BURGGRABEN
MUSEUM STR.
VIADUKTBOGEN
KÖNIG-
HOTTINGER AU
BLASIUS-HEUBER-STR.
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ANICH-STR.
FALLMERAYERSTR.
MARIA-THERESIEN STR.
ERLER STR.
GREILSTR.
MERANER STR.
BOZNER PLATZ
Galerie im Taxispalais
SÜDTIROLER PLATZ
Train Station
Bus Station
FÜRSTENWEG
Universitätsklinik (Hospital)
RECHENGASSE
AMPFERERSTR.
MAXIMILIAN-STR.
WILHELM
Triumphpforte
MÜLLER-STRASSE
TEMPLSTRASSE
MITTERWEG
SCHOPF STR.
SPECKBACHER-STR.
ANDREAS-HOFER-STRASSE
LEOPOLDSTR.
FISCHANALERSTR.
P. MAYRSTR.
FISCHER-STRASSE
INNRAIN
EGGER-LIENZ-STR.
Glockengiesserei
KONZERTSTR.
Transport Museum
Wilten Basilica
PASTORSTR.
Wilten Abbey
KLOSTERGASSE
BRENNERSTRASSE
BERGISEL
BARS & CLUBS
Bierstindl 11
Hafen 10
Innkeller 1
Plateau 3
Weli 4
Zappa 9
RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS
Chilini's 8
La Cucina 7
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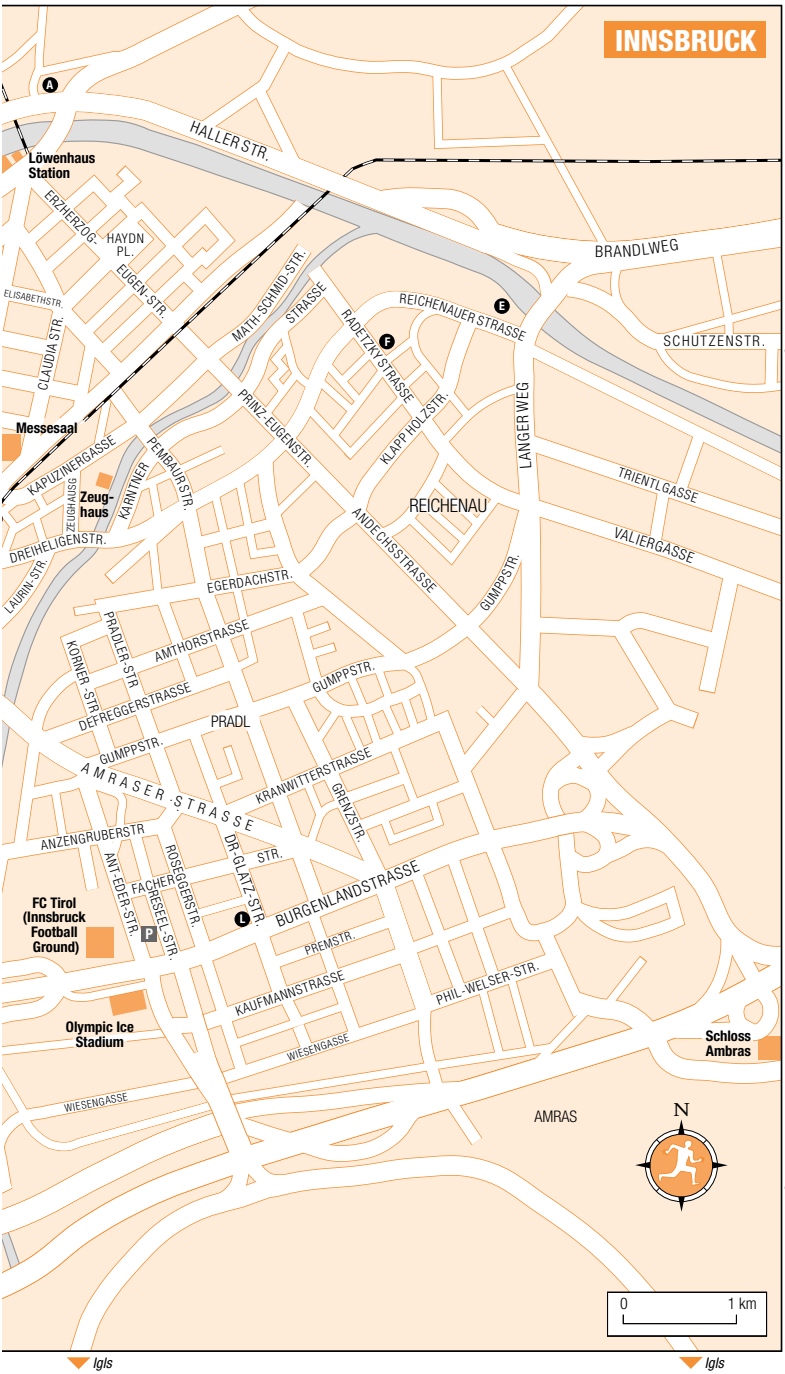
Prendi 6
Sahib 5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HAYDN PL.
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CLAUDIA STR.
MATH.-SCHMID-STR.
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REICHENAUER STRASSE
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BRANDLWEG
SCHUTZENSTR.
Kufstein & Salzburg
PRINZ-EUGENSTR.
KLAPPHOLZSTR.
LANGER WEG
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PEMBAURSTR.
KÄRNTNER
ZEUGHAUSG.
Zeug-haus
REICHENAU
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ANT.-EDER-STR.
ROSEGGERSTR.
DR.-GLATZ-STR.
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BURGENLANDSTRASSE
FC Tirol (Innsbruck Football Ground)
PREMSTR.
KAUFMANNSTRASSE
PHIL.-WELSER-STR.
Olympic Ice Stadium
WIESENGASSE
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Kufstein & Salzburg
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Innsbruck activities

Biking The tourist office produces an excellent map detailing the many cycling and mountain-bike routes accessible from central Innsbruck. For rentals try Sport Neuner, Salurnerstr 5 ⓣ0512/561501.

Hiking The tourist office has good free maps and suggestions, but also runs an extensive programme of guided walks – including sunrise and night-time hikes – from June to September. They're free to anyone in possession of an Innsbruck Club Card (see below). For more heavyweight hiking information and maps for the Innsbruck area and beyond, visit the the Österreichischer Alpenverein, at Wilhelm-Griel-Str 15, (Austrian Alpine Club; ⓣ0512/59547, ⓦwww.oeav.at).

Spa The town's most stylish facility is the Salurner Sauna, Salurner Str 6 (ⓣ0512/5025695), a 1927 building that includes a Finnish sauna, steam room and solarium.

Swimming Good municipal pools can be found indoors at Amraserstr 3 (ⓣ0512/342585); and outdoors at the Tivoli sports centre, Purtschellerstr 1 (May–Oct; ⓣ0512/342344).

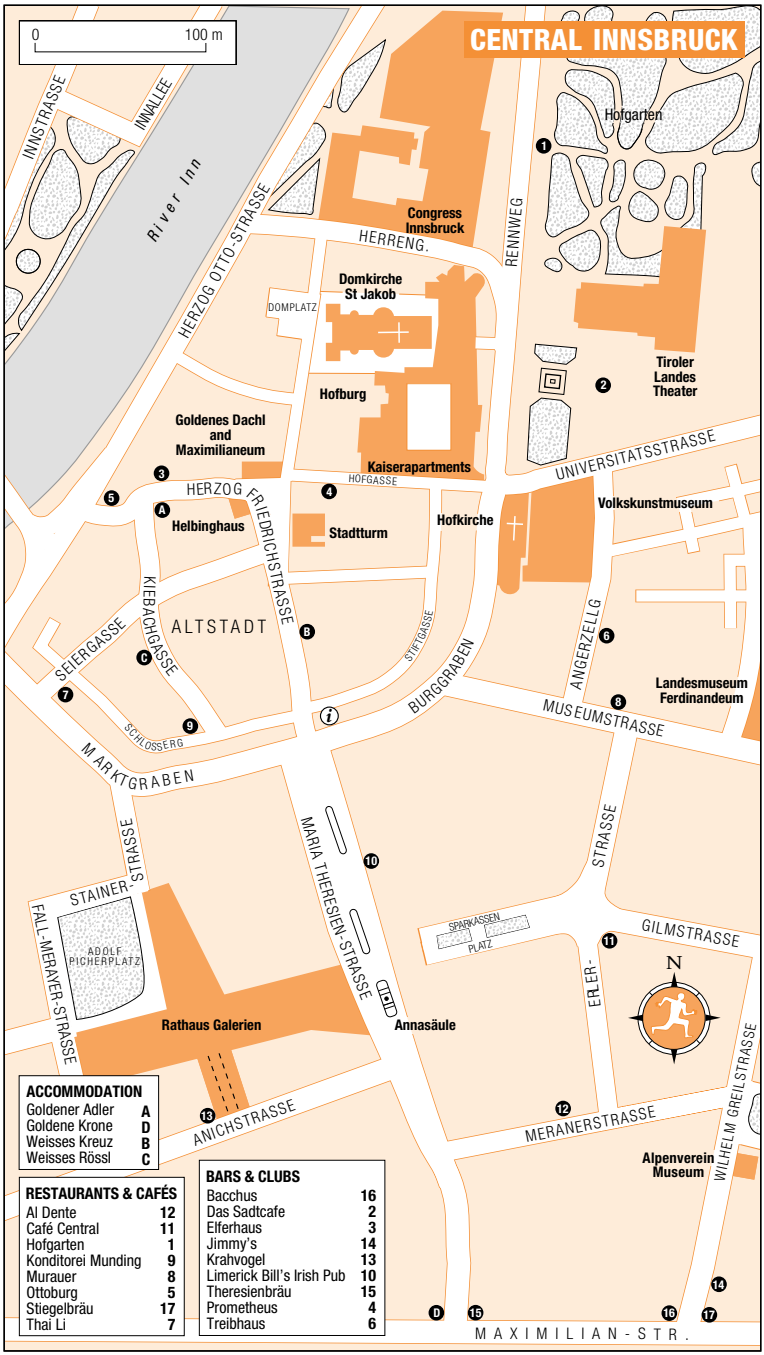
Winter sports Many ski areas are within easy day-trip distance of Innsbruck, with the Nordpark even accessible from the city centre, thanks to a recent extension of the Hungerburgbahn. The main winter-sports centre in the city is Olympiaworld (ⓣ0512/33838-221; ⓦwww.olympiaworld.at), a complex of buildings where you can ice skate indoors (all year round) and out (Nov–Feb) and experience a bobsleigh ride – pounding a 1220-metre-long track at speeds over 100kmph as the passenger of an experienced pilot (from €30 per person).

Sightseer Bus (see below), and the right to one cable-car journey on each of the Nordkette-Hafelekar, Patscherkofel, Hungerburgbahn and the Axamer Lizum. People staying in Innsbruck qualify for the **Innsbruck Club Card**, which is usually given to you at your accommodation (if not, enquire at the tourist office), and is useful in getting discounts on some tourist attractions and cable cars, as well as on ski passes (see p.481).

Innsbruck is easy enough to **get around** on foot, but the comprehensive **tram and bus** network comes in handy if you're staying in the suburbs, heading to the airport or visiting Schloss Ambras. The 24-hour ticket (€3.80) and seven-day pass (€11.90) are better value than a single-journey ticket, which costs €1.70 and doesn't allow for transfers. All can be bought from vending machines placed near tram and bus stops (only single tickets can be purchased from the driver), and should be punched in machines upon boarding. Another option is the **Sightseer Bus**, which plies the route between Schloss Ambras and the Alpine Zoo every half hour (hourly in winter) throughout the day (daily: May–Oct 9am–5.30pm; Nov–April 10am–5pm; one-way €2.80, day ticket €8.80) and is free with the Innsbruck card.

Accommodation

Both tourist office branches offer a speedy room-booking service for a small fee, or you can book in advance via their website (ⓦwww.innsbruck.info) for free. **Private rooms** in Innsbruck, or a bus ride away in suburban resorts like Igls (3km south) and Mutters (5km southwest), weigh in at around €18–26 per person, although tend to be about €5–10 more in the winter season. There's a shortage of good cheap **hotels** in Innsbruck, but plenty of atmospheric



ACCOMMODATION

Goldener Adler	A
Goldene Krone	D
Weisses Kreuz	B
Weisses Rössl	C

RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS

Al Dente	12
Café Central	11
Hofgarten	1
Konditorei Munding	9
Murauer	8
Ottoburg	5
Stiegelbräu	17
Thai Li	7

BARS & CLUBS

Bacchus	16
Das Sadtcafe	2
Elferhaus	3
Jimmy's	14
Krahvogel	13
Limerick Bill's Irish Pub	10
Theresienbräu	15
Prometheus	4
Treibhaus	6

downtown inns cater for the middle of the market. A decent amount of **hostel** accommodation is available, although it fills quickly in summer and in school holidays. There's one well-appointed **campsite**, *Camping Kranebitten*, 5km west of town at Kranebittner Allee 214 (Ⓣ0512/284180, Ⓦwww.campinginnsbruck.com; April–Oct), equipped with restaurant, laundry facilities and shop, and reached by taking bus #4176 from the Hauptbahnhof to Klammstrasse, then walking for five minutes along the main road.

Hotels and pensions

Binders Dr-Glatz-Str 20 Ⓣ0512/334360, Ⓦwww.binders.at. Modern, friendly inner-city hotel, some 25min walk from the centre (tram #3 runs to the top of the road). Most rooms are modern en-suite affairs, but a few have shared bath and WC. 5

Dollinger Hallerstr 7 Ⓣ0512/267506, Ⓦwww.dollinger.at. Good, family-run Gasthof just over the river from the Hungerburgbahn, offering en-suite rooms with phone and TV. 6

Goldene Krone Maria-Theresien-Str 46 Ⓣ0512/586160, Ⓦwww.goldene-krone.at. Comfortable downtown hotel with modern, rather cramped rooms at the southern end of Innsbruck's main thoroughfare, just by the Triumphpforte. 6

Goldener Adler Herzog-Friedrich-Str 6 Ⓣ0512/571111, Ⓦwww.goldeneradler.com. Medieval city-centre inn with Gothic feel inside and views out into the Altstadt. 9

Innbrücke Innstr 1 Ⓣ0512/281934, Ⓦwww.gasthofinnbruecke.at. Plain but comfortable Gasthof on the west bank of the Inn, just over the bridge from the Altstadt. More expensive rooms have en-suite facilities, although most are without. 4

Innrain Innrain 38 Ⓣ0512/588981, Ⓦwww.gasthof-innrain.com. Small Gasthof within easy walking distance of the Altstadt, with popular beer garden attached. Rooms with en-suite facilities and TV. 5

Pension Paula Weiherburggasse 15 Ⓣ0512/292262, Ⓦwww.pensionpaula.at. A long-standing favourite with both Austrian and foreign visitors (so it's worth reserving well in advance), perched attractively on the hillside up towards the Alpenzoo. Rooms with en-suite facilities are slightly more expensive than those without. 3

Schwarzer Bär Mariahilfstr 16 Ⓣ0512/294900, Ⓦwww.cityhotel.cc. Simple, comfortable Gasthof just over the Inn River from the Altstadt, with some en-suite rooms. 5

Weisses Kreuz Herzog-Friedrich-Str 31 Ⓣ0512/594790, Ⓦwww.weisseskreuz.at. An attractive old inn in the Altstadt, with creaky wooden corridors and bright, modern rooms; a good way of staying in a classic city-centre hotel without paying exorbitant prices. Some rooms share bathrooms; singles are among of the best value in the city. 4

Weisses Rössl Kiebachgasse 8 Ⓣ0512/583057, Ⓦwww.roessl.at. Cosy, family-run hotel in the Altstadt with fourteen modern, spacious bedrooms. 8

Wilhelmine Matha Kapuzinergasse 5 Ⓣ0676/5420982, Ⓦwww.tiscover.at/matha. Simple pension right in the centre, offering doubles with TV and shared facilities, but without breakfast. 3

Zach Wilhelm-Griel-Str 11 Ⓣ0512/589667, Ⓦwww.hotel-zach.at. Simple, convenient, mid-price downtown hotel only steps from the sights. 7

Hostels

Fritz-Prior-Schwedenhaus Rennweg 17b Ⓣ0512/585814, Ⓦwww.youth.hostel.aufbauwerk.com. Large, conveniently central hostel about 1km north of the Altstadt by the River Inn, open in July & Aug only. From the Hauptbahnhof take #4 to Handelsakademie or D/E to Hungerburg-Talstation. All rooms are en suite and facilities include games room, Internet and laundry.

Glockenhaus Weiherburggasse 3 Ⓣ0512/286515, Ⓦwww.hostelnikolaus.at. Ramshackle hostel, slightly uphill from the River Inn's west bank, within easy walking distance of the town centre. Suffers from the absence of communal facilities and unpleasant bathrooms. Bus W to bus stop Schloss Büchsenhausen, from the train station. A choice of dorm beds or doubles. 3

Jugendherberge Innsbruck Reichenauerstr 147 Ⓣ0512/346179,Ⓦwww.youth-hostel-innsbruck.at. The best year-round hostel option. Large, modern and clean, and although it's 4km east of the Altstadt, bus #O runs regularly between here and the corner of Laurin-Str and Amraser Str. Check-in time is 5–10pm. There are dorm beds and single and double rooms; YHA members get a reduction on rates. Facilities include laundry, kitchen, common rooms and bike rental. 3

Volkshaus Innsbruck Radetzkystr 47 Ⓣ0512/395882, Ⓦwww.volkshaus.at. Slightly dated hostel with only basic facilities, but a good fall-back. About 3.5km out of the centre, but bus R from the train station stops just outside.

The City

Most of what you will want to see in Innsbruck is confined to the central precincts of the **Altstadt**. A small area of sturdy medieval houses, many attractively painted in pastel colours and supported by sloping earthquake buttresses, it's bounded by the River Inn and the Graben, a street following the course of the moat that once surrounded the town's medieval core. Leading up to the Altstadt from the south, Innsbruck's main artery is the **Maria-Theresien-Strasse**, famed for its view north towards the great rock wall of the Nordkette. Outside this downtown area there's not a great deal to see, save for the former imperial arsenal or **Zeughaus**, in an anonymous area of apartment blocks and offices just east of the centre, and a cluster of Baroque churches and minor museums in the suburb of **Wilten** to the south.

The Altstadt

Main thoroughfare of the **Altstadt** is the broad, arcaded **Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse**, which at its northern end opens out into a plaza lined with gift-shops and overlooked by the **Goldenes Dachl**, or "Golden Roof" (though the "golden" roof tiles are actually copper), built in the 1490s to cover a balcony from which the imperial court could observe the square below. The balcony itself is adorned with a series of reliefs (these are replicas – originals are in the Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum; p.474), showing a troupe of Moorish dancers performing for Emperor Maximilian I and his second wife Bianca Maria Sforza – she's the one holding the apple, which would have been thrown to the dancers as a token of appreciation. The woman behind Bianca is Max's beloved first wife, Maria of Burgundy. Part of the building behind the Goldenes Dachl now houses the **Maximilianeum** (May–Sept daily 10am–5pm; Oct–April

▲ Altstadt

Thurs–Sun 10am–5pm; €5, or €7 in combination with Stadtturm, see below), a museum that puts a modern, show-biz gloss on the city's most famous resident. The collection's main drawback is its small size – there are a couple of original artworks by Maximilian's court painters (including a powerful deathbed portrait by an unknown master), but little else of real vintage. What you're really paying for is the headphone commentary (English available), a 20-minute documentary film about Maximilian's life and the chance to stand behind the Goldenes Dachl balcony.

A parade of Gothic-era town houses adds distinction to the western side of Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse, although most are outshone by the **Helblinghaus**, a medieval structure adorned with the swirling encrustations of icing-like Rococo stucco added in the 1730s. Across the road looms the fifteenth-century **Stadtturm** (daily: June–Sept 10am–8pm; Oct–May 10am–5pm; €3); the viewing platform affords views across neighbouring rooftops towards the Nordkette rearing up to the north.

The Domkirche and the Hofburg

Beside the Goldenes Dachl, an alley leads north to the Domplatz and the **Domkirche St Jakob**, an unspectacular example of eighteenth-century architecture, which nevertheless conceals a couple of worthwhile artworks. Most renowned is the *Madonna and Child* by German master Lucas Cranach the Elder, buried amidst the fussy detail of the high altar. To the left is the funerary monument to Archduke Maximilian III (son of Emperor Maximilian II and nephew of Archduke Ferdinand II), whose statue kneels in prayer watched over by a paternal-looking St George, the latter accompanied by an expiring dragon. This sculptural ensemble shelters under a canopy embellished with carved birds, caterpillars and snails.

East of the Domkirche, the **Hofburg** marks the spot where Leopold III, the first Habsburg to wield power in Innsbruck, based his rudimentary court, though the whole complex was rebuilt in the eighteenth century on the instructions of Maria Theresia. Within the cavernous and for the most part unremarkable **Kaiserapartments** (Mon–Sat 9am–4.30pm; €5.50, guided tours at 11am & 2pm, €2.20), monumental wall paintings provide a pictorial guide to Habsburg family history – those in the state ballroom show Maria Theresia, Josef II and Francis I flanked by lesser members of the imperial family.

The Hofkirche and the Volkskunstmuseum

At the eastern entrance to the Altstadt, at the head of the Rennweg, the outwardly unassuming **Hofkirche** contains the most impressive of Innsbruck's imperial monuments, the **Cenotaph of Emperor Maximilian** (July & Aug Mon–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 12.30–5pm; Sept–June Mon–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm; €3, combined ticket with Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum €6.50). An extraordinary piece of imperial propaganda, masterminded by Maximilian himself, it was designed both to consummate Maximilian I's special relationship with Innsbruck and to bolster the prestige of the dynasty. Ambitious plans for the emperor's tomb to be flanked by a series of forty larger-than-life statues, one hundred statuettes and the busts of 32 Roman emperors, representing both the real and spiritual ancestors of Maximilian, were never realized, though the resulting ensemble is still impressive – its effect dulled only slightly by the knowledge that the emperor is actually buried at the other end of Austria. Maximilian died in Wels in January 1519 having been refused entry to Innsbruck by burghers fearful that his soldiers wouldn't pay their bills, and his body was interred in Wiener Neustadt (see p.207).

Krippen

Like so many other aspects of popular Catholicism in Austria, the practice of displaying **Krippen** (nativity scenes, literally "cribs") in churches and homes goes back to the Counter-Reforming activities of the Jesuits, who considered the introduction of a little theatre and colour at Christmas an effective means of weaning the local population away from dour Protestantism. The history of Krippen probably dates back to the fifteenth century when freestanding wooden figures representing characters from the gospels began to appear in European churches. However, it wasn't until the early 1600s that the Jesuits began encouraging their use in the run-up to Christmas. Nativity scenes were introduced all over south and central Europe, although Naples, Sicily and alpine Austria appear to be the places where they caught on most.

The two **main themes** depicted in Austrian cribs are the birth of Jesus, with statuettes of the Holy family surrounded by model animals, and sometimes shepherds; and the Journey of the Magi, with the three kings riding towards Bethlehem with their retinue. In the heady Baroque atmosphere of seventeenth-century Austria, Christmas cribs became increasingly lavish and intricate, with vast crowds of delicately carved figures, model scenery and painted backdrops – investing the craft with the theatricality of the stage set. Some crib scenes were set in fanciful oriental landscapes, while others were much more rooted in local culture, featuring figures clad in Austrian traditional costume, and alpine landscapes in the background.

Concerned by the Catholic church's excessive hold over Austrian society, the reform-minded **emperor Josef II** banned cribs from churches in 1782. Paradoxically, this actually stimulated crib-making as a popular craft. With cribs now displayed in private houses instead of churches, the number of village craftsmen involved in their construction dramatically increased. Even now most places in Austria will have an association of crib-makers who produce new work every year, and some villages – notably Thaur in Tyrol (see p.489) – are known for the crib exhibitions around Christmas.

Twenty-eight statues line the emperor's empty **tomb**, including Maximilian's Habsburg ancestors Rudolf I, Albrecht II and Friedrich III, as well as more fanciful antecedents such as Clovis, fifth-century king of the Franks. Sculptor Peter Vischer was responsible for most of the figures, two of which were cast from designs by **Albrecht Dürer**: the quasi-mythical English King Arthur (he's recognizable from the three lions on his shield), and sixth-century leader of the Ostrogoths, Theoderic, the third statue to Arthur's left. The tomb itself is topped by a kneeling statue of Maximilian, and surrounded by marble reliefs depicting the emperor's great victories, all designed by Flemish artist Alexander Colin.

Beside the church entrance, a more modern tomb, topped by a suitably heroic statue, holds the remains of **Andreas Hofer**, the Tyrolean patriot executed in Mantua on French orders in 1810 (see p.564). Steps at the rear of the nave ascend towards the tomb of **Archduke Ferdinand II**, great-grandson of Maximilian I and regent of Tyrol. It's located in the so-called **Silberkapelle**, or silver chapel – thus named because of the silver-plated Madonna that adorns the far wall. She is faced by Ferdinand's suit of armour, suspended in a kneeling position halfway up the wall. The bones of the man himself are housed in the tomb directly below, topped by a marble effigy that's also the work of Colin. The grave at the northern end of the chapel belongs to Ferdinand's beloved first wife, commoner **Philippa Welser**, for whom the chapel was initially built.

Next door to the Hofkirche, the **Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum**, or Tyrolean Folklore Museum (same hours as Hofkirche; €5), is replete with traditional woodcraft. There are instructive English-language texts, and an exhaustive collection of Tyrolean costumes on the second floor, the most interesting being

a selection of grotesque outfits worn during carnival time. Leading off the courtyard are a couple of rooms devoted to *Krippen*, or nativity scenes, most of them nineteenth-century pieces from the village of Thaur (see p.489) near Hall, where the craft is still practised.

The Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum

A short walk south of the Volkskunstmuseum, at Museumstr 15, the **Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum** (June–Sept daily 10am–6pm Thurs 10am–9pm; Oct–May Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; €8, audio guide €2, combination ticket with Zeughaus €12) greets you with a motley collection of archeological fragments, but also an unsurpassed range of paintings. Most space is devoted to the fifteenth-century "Pustertal Painters" based around Bruneck (Brunico) in the South Tyrol, pre-eminent among whom was Michael Pacher (see p.431), who introduced Italian Renaissance techniques into central European painting and sculpture. Pacher was in demand all over Austria in the late 1400s, and the gallery here is the best place to get a feel for the evolution of his, and his apprentice Friedrich Pacher's, art. Other highlights point to the unsqueamish nature of contemporary piety: Jakob von Seckau's *Martyrdom of St Ursula* (an entirely fictitious saint but no less popular) portrays the heroine standing in a boat and being shot at by bowmen, while an anonymous fifteenth-century *Martyrdom of St Erasmus* sees the saint being boiled, poked in the eye, disembowelled and having his fingernails torn out all at the same time. The Baroque collection is disappointing, although a few small eighteenth-century pieces are worth dwelling on, among them Simon Troger's sculpture of the Archangel Michael smiting Lucifer, and a house-altar by Stefan Föger – basically a miniature version of a church high altar, encased in a glass jar for the domestic mantelpiece. The odd Klimt and Kokoschka aside, twentieth-century Austrian art is best represented by a clutch of brooding canvases from East Tyrolean painter Albin Egger-Lienz (see p.363).

The Zeughaus

Leaving the centre via Universitätstrasse, one block north of Museumstrasse, and passing under the railway viaduct, brings you in about ten minutes to Zeughausgasse and the former imperial arsenal, or **Zeughaus** (June–Sept daily 10am–5pm; Oct–May Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €8), built by Maximilian I to provide a secure base for gunpowder and cannon manufacture. The building now contains an attractive romp through the history of Tyrol, beginning with a geological section on the various mineral deposits exploited by the medieval silver miners of Schwaz. Engravings and pamphlets illustrate the religious struggles of the sixteenth century, and the church-supported campaigns against witches and devil-worshippers that followed. Most space, however, is devoted to Andreas Hofer, the innkeeper who led the struggle for Tyrolean independence from Napoleon and his Bavarian allies. A pile of crude staves and clubs graphically illustrates how poorly armed the Tyrolean insurgents were, rendering their initial military successes all the more impressive. Hofer's insurgents beat the Bavarians three times on the Bergisel hill just south of Innsbruck in 1809, and briefly set up a provisional government in Innsbruck's Hofburg, before being forced out by superior numbers. The importance of Hofer to the Tyrol's sense of identity is evident – you'll see his bearded visage peering from political posters, playing cards, and even a tin of Andreas Hofer coffee. A TV screen shows a 25-minute feature film made about Hofer in 1929 – not a silent cinema classic by any means, but worth watching for the extravagantly mounted battle scenes,

in which Hofer's rag-tag army routs Napoleonic troops. Elsewhere in the museum, there's a music room in which you can listen to CDs of chamber music composed by Tyrolean court composers, and a colourful selection of early-twentieth-century tourism posters showing the province's growing importance as a holiday destination.

Maria-Theresien-Strasse

Heading south from the Altstadt, **Maria-Theresien-Strasse** cuts a swath through a grid of busy downtown streets. The sober buildings along its length are predominantly nineteenth-century apartment blocks, now occupied by run-of-the-mill boutiques and the odd restaurant. Main focus of the thoroughfare's middle section is the **Annasäule**, a column erected to commemorate the defeat of the Bavarians on St Anne's Day, July 26, 1703. It's topped by a statue of the Virgin, with St Anne herself appearing among the supporting cast of gesticulating saints at the column's base, notably a muscular St George in dragon-spearing mood. It's from the Annasäule onwards that you begin to appreciate the single most famous thing about the Maria-Theresien-Strasse: the **view** back northwards to Innsbruck's local mountain, the Nordkette, which looms majestically above the creamy-yellow town houses and trolleybus wires. A short side-trip eastwards to Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse soon brings you to the **Alpenverein-Museum** at no. 15 (on the second floor in the office of the Austrian Alpine Association, or OEAV; daily 9am–5pm; €2.18 Ⓦwww.alpenverein.at), which presents a brief overview of the history of alpinism with a display of maps, climbing equipment and models of mountain huts.

Returning to Maria-Theresien-Strasse and continuing south, the **Galerie im Taxispalais** at no. 45 (Tues–Sun 11am–6pm, Thurs 11am–8pm; €3, Sun free; Ⓦwww.galerieimtaxispalais.at) is the city's main venue for contemporary art shows, with exhibits filling a smart glass-covered central courtyard. Dominating the street's northern end, the **Triumphpforte**, or triumphal arch, was built in advance of celebrations marking the marriage of Maria Theresia's son Leopold (the future emperor Leopold II) in 1756. The oddly stern and joyless monument (it's said that the sudden death of the empress's husband Franz caused a fundamental rethink of its ornamentation) is adorned with medallions of Maria Theresia and her successor Josef II on the north side, Leopold and spouse on the south. A group of nymphs on the arch's roof add a Neoclassical touch. Beyond the arch, Leopoldstrasse continues south towards Wilten, 1.5km away.

Wilten

Lying in the shadow of the attractively wooded Bergisel hill, the suburb of **Wilten** harbours a brace of Baroque churches and a motley collection of small museums. The twin-towered **Wiltener Basilika** dominates, its Rococo edifice, built in the 1750s by the Tyrolean priest-architect Franz de Paula Penz, belying the fact that it occupies a long-standing pilgrimage site. Inside, ceiling scenes by Augsburg painter Matthäus Gündter include a particularly graphic Salome holding aloft the head of John the Baptist, and are framed by intricate mouldings, rich in leafy fronds and tendrils.

A short distance east of the Basilika is the ruddy facade of **Stift Wilten** (Ⓦwww.stiftwilten.at), the entrance to which is guarded by statues of giants Thyrsus and Haymon. According to myth, itinerant dragon-slayer Haymon killed local giant Thyrsus in a dispute, and went on to found Stift Wilten by way of penance. The seventeenth-century **stiftskirche** merits a quick peek, even though it lacks the delicacy of the nearby Basilika.

Across the road from the Basilika, the tram depot contains a small **Localbahnmuseum** (May–Oct Sat only; 9am–5pm; €3), which is little more than an engine shed containing a few locomotives, but special museum trains run from here to Igls on summer Sundays. Just down the hill from the abbey, on the corner of Leopoldstrasse and Egger-Lienz-Strasse, the Grassmayr **Glockengiesserei**, or bell foundry (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, May–Sept also Sat 9am–5pm; €4), treats visitors to a short display detailing the history of bell-casting, and a chance to peruse the offerings – models of bells, mostly – in the company's gift shop.

Immediately to the south of the abbey complex lies the **Bergisel**, scene of the bloody battles between Andreas Hofer's rebels and Franco-Bavarian forces in 1809. Halfway up the hill, and accessed by a series of wooded paths, stands the

Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529–95)

The second son of Emperor Ferdinand I, the future **Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol** looked set for a glittering imperial career. He was appointed governor of Bohemia at the age of 18, and was initially preferred by his father over his elder brother Maximilian (who was thought by many to be a closet Protestant) as heir to the throne. Yet Ferdinand disqualified himself from such a high office by falling in love with a commoner, **Philippa Welser**, daughter of an Augsburg banker. Expelled from court for not adhering to the correct breeding habits, Ferdinand was replaced by Maximilian (the future Maximilian II) in the order of succession.

Ferdinand's partial political rehabilitation came about when, according to one popular tale, Philippa travelled to Ferdinand I's court in Prague under an assumed name. There she regaled the emperor with a moving story about a wicked father who had disowned his son for falling in love with the wrong woman. Suitably humbled, the august Habsburg dropped his opposition to the relationship. Whatever the real reason for the change of heart, the elder Ferdinand sanctioned a **morganatic marriage** between the two in 1557. Ferdinand and Philippa's sons Karl and Andreas were nevertheless given top imperial and ecclesiastical posts, with Andreas ultimately becoming a cardinal. Ferdinand himself was a devout Catholic, and Protestantism made few inroads in the Tyrol under his stewardship.

After Welser's death in 1580, Ferdinand married the 16-year-old **Anna Gonzaga of Mantua**, producing three daughters in as many years – the youngest of whom, Anne, in true Habsburg style, married her cousin, the emperor Matthias, in order to keep the archducal lands in the family. Anna never wholly replaced Philippa Welser in Ferdinand's affections. He built the Silberkapelle in the Hofkirche (see p.472) as a monument to Philippa, and wished to be buried there himself.

Throughout the 1580s Ferdinand increasingly threw his energies into a mania for collecting that produced the famous **Kunst und Wunderkammer**, a museum in which works of art were displayed beside bizarre natural phenomena and trinkets from far-flung places. To educated people of the time, such juxtapositions demonstrated the infinite diversity of God's creation. The popularity of such collections survived well into the next century, as demonstrated by the Kunst und Wunderkammer of the archbishops of Salzburg, together with Archbishop Markus Sitticus's enthusiasm for deformed animals (see p.390). Ferdinand went a step further than many contemporaries by acquiring human exhibits with which to amaze his guests, keeping both a giant and dwarves at Schloss Ambras in specially made quarters.

On Ferdinand's death, the Ambras collection was sold to Emperor Rudolf II – Ferdinand's great rival in the collecting of oddities. Rudolf never got round to moving the objects out of the Schloss so the collection stayed here in its entirety until 1805, when the most valuable pieces were taken to Vienna to keep them out of the hands of the Bavarians.

Bergisel-Kaiserjägermuseum (April–Oct daily 9am–5pm; €3), honouring the fighters of the Tyrolean War of Independence, and their successors in subsequent wars, in suitably reverential mode. Above the museum, a small park with a monument to Andreas Hofer leads to the base of the take-off ramp for the **Sprungstadion**, the ski-jump arena used in the 1964 and 1976 Olympics. You can take the funicular railway to the top (daily: May–Oct 9am–6pm; Nov–April 10am–5pm; €8.30 combined ticket with the Bergisel-Kaiserjägermuseum; Ⓦ www.bergisel.info) and enjoy spectacular views over Innsbruck. Check the website for competitions or try and catch local ski-jumpers in training – usually weekends.

Schloss Ambras

Home of Maximilian I's great-grandson Archduke Ferdinand II, **Schloss Ambras** (August daily 10am–7pm; Dec–July & Sept–Oct daily 10am–5pm; €8, entrance to surrounding gardens is free) is one of the foremost Renaissance palaces in Austria, affording fascinating insight into the courtly culture of the sixteenth century. Situated 5km southeast of the Altstadt, it can be reached by taking tram #6 to the Schloss Ambras stop, or tram #3 to the end of Amraserstrasse before following paths under the autobahn and climbing for ten minutes up the wooded hillock to the Schloss. Alternatively, the Sightseer Bus (see p.468) will drop you right at the front gate.

Entering the Schloss through the western gateway, you're directed towards the **Lower Schloss**, comprising an ensemble of outbuildings. First of these, the **Rustkammer**, flaunts jousting armour from the late fifteenth century, including several suits made for Archduke Ferdinand himself. The collection's most striking piece, however, is the armour worn by Ferdinand's court giant, Bartlmä Bon, at the Vienna tournament of 1560.

Ferdinand's **Kunst und Wunderkammer** is preserved in something approaching its original form, although many of its most treasured items – including the much-admired golden salt cellar by Benvenuto Cellini – have been removed to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Busts of Roman rulers from Julius Caesar to Emperor Theodosius (originally intended for the cenotaph of Maximilian in the Hofkirche) rub shoulders with games and puzzles, Far Eastern porcelain, Turkish hats and an exquisite statuette of Death carved from pearwood. More unsettling to modern eyes, the portrait gallery is filled with the freakish contemporaries who so fascinated Ferdinand: in addition to his court giant and several court dwarfs are Petrus Gonsalvus of Tenerife, the so-called "Hirsute Man", pictured here with his similarly afflicted son and daughter; and Vlad Tepesch (aka Vlad the Impaler), the fifteenth-century ruler of Transylvania who resurfaced four hundred years later as the inspiration behind Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

Slightly further into the park, Ferdinand's **Spanische Saal** features a dazzlingly intricate wood-inlay ceiling, and walls decorated with 27 full-length portraits of the rulers of the Tyrol. From here, steps lead to the **Upper Schloss**, where an extensive **portrait gallery** holds the works of artists who are sometimes less interesting than their sitters – a vast array of European rulers and aristocrats across the centuries. The collection also offers a good crash course in Habsburg family history, starting with a portrait of Albrecht III, painted around 1430, and revealing the jutting lower lip and strong jaw that remained a family trademark thereafter. Finally, a room leading off the interior courtyard houses one of the Schloss's most enchanting artworks, an **altar of St George** carved by Sebald Bocksdorfer and painted by Sebastian Scheel about 1500, with a marvellous gilt relief of the saint. The wings portray Maximilian I carrying sheaves of corn – a piece of symbolism linking the knightly warrior-emperor to prosperity and the protection of the harvests.

Hungerburgbahn and the Alpenzoo

Since the completion of an extension at the end of 2007, the **Hungerburgbahn** funicular (Mon–Fri 6.30am–7pm, Sat & Sun 8am–7pm) has been able to whisk visitors from an underground station by Congress Innsbruck up the flanks of the **Nordkette**. As the Hungerbergbahn surfaces at the northern end of the Rennweg, its first stop is Löwenhaus Station where a large round building houses the **Rundgemälde**, (April–Oct daily 9am–4.45pm; €2.50), or Panorama, a circular painting portraying the Battle of Bergisel in 1809, when Andreas Hofer's Tyrolean insurgents routed a mixed French-Bavarian force. The huge fresco was unveiled in 1896, when such panoramas were all the rage in a continental Europe fond of didactic, patriotic displays. Back on the railway, the Hungerburgbahn crosses the Inn on a bridge with sweeping curves to ascend the affluent hillside suburb of Hungerburg (return from Congress Innsbruck: €5.60).

Further up, you can alight to visit the **Alpenzoo** (daily: May–Sept 9am–6pm, Oct–April 9am–5pm; €9, including return on Hungerburgbahn; Ⓦwww.alpenzoo.at), also reachable by walking 800m up Wieherburggasse from the west bank of the River Inn. The zoo holds a collection of animals indigenous to Europe's mountainous regions, including bears, eagles, pine martens (largely nocturnal, so not much chance of seeing them), ibex, lynx and otter. Finally, the funicular arrives at the Hungerburg (return from Congress Innsbruck: €22) where you'll need to switch to the two-stage cable car (Sat–Thurs 8.30am–5.30pm, Fri 8.30am–11.30pm; return €20.80) for the final legs of the journey up the 1905-metre **Seegrube**, site of café-restaurant *Seegrube*, and the 2334-metre **Hafelekar** mountain (daily 9am–5pm). The journey provides truly spectacular views of the city far below, as well as a broad panorama of the snow-capped Alps to the south.

Eating, drinking and entertainment

Innsbruck's Altstadt is crowded with all manner of cafés, restaurants and bars. A constant flow of tourists ensures that not all are cheap, but it's extremely rare to be fobbed off with nondescript food or indifferent service. There's no shortage of daytime **snack food**, with Würstelstands on both Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse and Maria-Theresien-Strasse. The handy *Magic Pizza*, on the corner of Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse and Kiebachgasse, doles out inexpensive pizza slices.

A wide range of **bars** are scattered throughout the centre, and in the Viadukt-bogen – a line of railway arches ten minutes' walk east of the Altstadt. Central bars are usually open until around 2am, although several go on for a couple of hours longer, and some until around 6am on weekend nights. Several bars are good for live music, particularly *Treibhaus* and *Bierstindl*, while big-name bands play at large multi-purpose venues like the Olympiastadion or Messehalle.

Although not in the same league as Salzburg or Graz, Innsbruck still serves up a varied diet of **high culture**. The Tiroler Landestheater, Rennweg 2 (Ⓦwww.landestheater.at), is the main venue for serious drama, opera and ballet; bigger productions sometimes make use of the Congress Centre on Rennweg. Smaller recitals occasionally take place in Schloss Ambras, site of a Festival of Early Music in August – the **Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik** – (Ⓦwww.altemusik.at) specializing in music of the Baroque and early classical period (advance bookings can be made through the tourist office or online). Information and **tickets** for all cultural events are available from the tourist office.

Cafés

Café Central Gilmstr 5. Venerable city-centre café a few steps southeast of the Altstadt. The nearest thing to a Viennese Kaffeehaus that Innsbruck possesses, with a bewildering array of coffees and mouth-watering choice of cakes, but a smoky atmosphere.

Konditorei Munding corner of Kiebachgasse and Schlossergasse. Much revered traditional Konditorei bang in the middle of the Altstadt with a gorgeous selection of pastries, cakes and own-brand sweets.

Murauer Adamgasse 5–7. Pleasant, small, unpretentious and inexpensive café with good cakes; regulars read the papers and while away the day here.

Restaurants

Al Dente Meranerstr 7. Popular pasta joint in the centre of town, with a few vegetarian choices on the menu and a salad bar.

Chilini's Bozner Platz 6. Large, brightly decorated restaurant offering the regular range of Mexican cuisine – although it's a bit bland for real hot-food freaks.

La Cucina Museumstr 26. Bright and breezy Italian restaurant with a wide range of reasonably priced pizzas, an impressive choice of pasta dishes, and more expensive Italian classics (such as *saltimbocca alla Romana*) and some excellent desserts.

No. 1 Kaserjägerstr. Excellent, cheap Thai restaurant around the corner from the Hofkirche with tasty Tagesmenüs from €7.

Ottoburg Herzog-Friedrich-Str 1 ⓣ0512/574652. Bustling establishment in a fifteenth-century town house, with a posh restaurant upstairs with low wooden ceilings (reservations recommended) and a more run-of-the-mill selection of Austrian standards downstairs. Closed Mon.

Prendi Viaduktbogen. Budget pizzeria about 10min from the Altstadt along Museumstr. Good place to start before a nocturnal exploration of the Viaduktbogen bars.

Sahib Sillgasse 3. Good, slightly pricey Indian restaurant round the corner from the Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum. Main courses from around €12, lunchtime menus from around €8.

Stiegelbräu Wilhelm-Griel-Str 25. A bit antiseptic despite attempts to induce a homely beer-hall atmosphere, but a good centrally located place in which to sample standard Austrian dishes, as well as inexpensive Tyrolean fare such as *Gröstl* and *Käsespätzle*. The adjoining beer bar is the place to snack on simpler fare like sausages and goulash. Closed Sun.

Thai Li Marktgraben 3 . Plush Thai restaurant in the Altstadt with reasonably authentic fare. Main courses hover around the €12 mark, although there's usually a cheap lunchtime menu. There's another branch in the Rathausgalerie.

Weisses Rössl Kiebachgasse 8. First-floor, wood-panelled restaurant above the hotel of the same name, with a good mix of tourists and locals, and a wide range of Austrian food. A good place for Tyrolean specialities and inexpensive Tagesmenüs.

Bars, clubs and venues

Bacchus Salurner Str 18. Lively bar open daily, weekend nights until 6am.

Bierstindl Klostergasse 6. ⓦwww.bierstindl.at. Cultural centre and café-bar in Wilten which hosts fringe theatre and rock/jazz concerts, some of which take place in the beer garden over the summer. Closed Mon.

Das Stadtcafe Universitätsstr. 1 Magnificent lounge club with enormous designer café and bars, mainstream DJs and often live music playing to a busy dance floor until 4am on weekend nights. Closed Mon.

Elferhaus Herzog-Friedrich-Str 11. Crowded, narrow, enduringly popular city-centre place with a selection of Austrian lagers and Weissbier on tap, plus numerous bottled varieties from around the world. Also a popular place to eat, with a small but well-chosen menu of ribs, burgers and other pub favourites. Food until 10pm, open until 2am.

Hafen Innrain 149, ⓦwww.hafen.cc. Innsbruck's principal clubbing venue, 1.5km southwest of the centre along Innrain, with a weekly programme of big techno nights and top-name DJs.

Hofgarten Rennweg 6a. A pavilion in the corner of the Hofgarten park, opposite the Hofburg, with plenty of outdoor seating in the summer. Popular hangout for a dressy crowd. Open until 4am.

Innkeller Innstr 1. Best of the bars on the west bank of the Inn, with youngish crowds imbibing to a predominantly alternative dance or post-rock soundtrack provided by resident DJs. Closed Sun.

Jimmy's Wilhelm-Greil-Str 17. Ultra-modern and ultra-cool bar attracting hip teens and twenty-somethings. Techno and alternative dance DJs play in the *Blue Chip* bar in the basement.

Krahvogel Anichstr 12. Funky city-centre bar with a good range of Austrian and Belgian draught beers, and a big choice of snacks in the soup and sandwiches line. Outdoor seating in the courtyard at the back.

Limerick Bill's Irish Pub Maria-Theresien-Str 9. Large and lively Irish pub made up of a succession of small snug rooms. Occasional live music.

Plateau Viaduktbogen 51. Tiny, brick-walled club underneath the railway arches with mad, cramped and very fun dance floor: drinks are served between the legs of those dancing on the bar. The mayhem often lasts until 6am.
Prometheus Hofgasse 2. Conveniently central place attracting youngish, mildly bohemian types. There's a cramped but convivial bar upstairs, serving sandwiches and other snacks; and a sweaty cellar disco offering themed party nights that could feature anything from salsa to Britpop.
Theresienbräu Maria-Theresien-Str 51–53. Animated funpub serving ales brewed on the premises to a young, hedonistic crowd. It also does cheap lunchtime menus.
Treibhaus Angerzellgasse 8, ⓦ www.treibhaus.at. Cultural centre that doubles as a popular weekend drinking venue for a young arty set and the best place to catch alternative bands, local acts, world music or jazz.
Weli Viaduktbogen 26. One of the less pretentious places along the Viaduktbogen, this friendly café-pub has board games and good home-style cooking.
Zappa Rechengasse 5. Stylish and friendly basement bar in the university district southwest of the centre, decorated with rock and film memorabilia and psychedelic wall paintings. Studenty clientele (it's underneath a hall of residence) and a different style of music (anything from reggae to alternative rock) every night, with in-house DJs at weekends.

Listings

Books Tyrolia, Maria-Theresien-Str 15, has the biggest range of English-language paperbacks. Freytag & Berndt, Wilhelm-Greil-Str 15, has English-language travel books and maps.
Car rental Ajax, Amraserstr 6 ⓣ0512/583232; Avis, Salurnerstr 15 ⓣ0512/571754; Hertz, Südtirolerplatz 1 ⓣ0512/580901.
Cinema Cinematograph, Museumstr 31 (ⓣ0512/578500, ⓦ www.cinematograph.at) and Leokino, Anichstr 36 (ⓣ0512/560470, ⓦ www.leokino.at), show art-house films in their original languages.
Consulates UK, Kaiserjägerstr 1, top floor (ⓣ0512/588320); South Africa, Leopoldstr 53 (ⓣ0512/59416). Other nationals should contact their embassies in Vienna.
Fleamarket At Hafen, Sat 6am–1pm.
Hospital Universitätskliniken, Anichstr 35 (ⓣ0512/504-0).
Internet Call On Me Internet café, Innrain 20. Free Wi-Fi in Das Stadtcafe.
Laundry Bubble Point, Andreas-Hofer-Str 37, and Brixnerstr 1 (Mon–Fri 8am–10pm, Sat & Sun 8am–8pm).
Left luggage Lockers at the train station. Smallest locker (big enough for most packs) €2 for 24hr.
Police Kaiserjägerstr 8 (ⓣ0512/5900).
Post office Maximilianstr 2, open 24hr.
Taxis Innsbrucker Funk-Taxi ⓣ0512/5311.

Around Innsbruck

A glut of interesting historic towns and superb jumping off points to explore the outdoors cluster **around Innsbruck** – frequent trains and buses put none more than half an hour away. The single most obvious place to head for outdoor activities is the beautifully situated and rather chic alpine resort of **Seefeld**, known for its skiing, hiking and biking. Far less ritzy but equally alluring is the **Stubaital**, a valley scattered with workaday villages and fabulous opportunities for mountain activities: glacier **skiing** is possible all year, while in summer the **Stubaier Höhenweg** offers an exceptional multi-day hiking circuit in a stunning high-alpine landscape.

Some absorbing old towns lie below the peaks and dot the **Inntal**, or Inn Valley, through which Tyrol's main **east–west** road and rail routes run. West of

Skiing around Innsbruck

While Innsbruck will never quite match the convenience of dedicated resorts, it boasts a remarkable amount of skiing on the doorstep and has the advantage of urban facilities and attractions, not to mention a gorgeous late-December Christmas market. Snow cover is guaranteed thanks to generally high elevations and snowmaking equipment on hand lower down. In addition, extremely economical ski passes and packages are available.

Of Innsbruck's nine ski areas (Ⓦwww.ski-innsbruck.at) the closest is **Nordpark** (Ⓦwww.nordpark.com), whose slopes are directly accessible from the city centre via the Hungerburgbahn (see p.478), and convenient enough that city dwellers sometimes ski in their lunch hours. Aside from fabulous panoramas, the ski area boasts an impressive half-pipe and taxing expert-level runs. The other eight ski areas around Innsbruck are all on the opposite, southern, side of the valley and generally offer much mellower terrain ideal for relaxed, wide turn skiing; which makes up the majority of the Innsbruck area's 285km of pistes. Most exceptional among them is the **Stubai Gletscher** (Ⓦwww.stubaier-gletscher.com), a ski area that commands 110km of runs and 25 cable cars, 35km to the southwest, and glacier skiing is possible all year round. Innsbruck's tourist offices runs all-in summer packages for around €50 per person.

A range of **lift passes** cover the above nine ski regions individually or in combination for one or more days. The Nordpark, for example, offers day passes for €27, less if you arrive later in the day (reductions offered at hourly intervals until 2pm when passes cost only €15). The **Innsbruck Gletcher Skipass** covers the whole of the Innsbruck area, includes ski shuttles from the town centre and costs bearers of the Innsbruck Club Card (see p.468) €99 for three days; €170 for six. The **Innsbruck Super Skipass** combines three days skiing in the Innsbruck region with a day each at St Anton and Kitzbühel, for €13, including transfers. Passes are available from all lift stations or from the Innsbruck tourist office. Also look out for Innsbruck's **ski packages** (Ⓦwww.innsbruck.info/packages), which start at €197 for three nights bed and breakfast and a two-day ski pass; or the Super Skipass and seven nights half-board in a hotel for €644. It's easy to rent equipment at lift stations but you'll waste less valuable lift time by sorting things out in advance from Rental Ski Service, Leopoldstr 4 (Ⓣ0512/581742, Ⓦwww.letsrent.at).

Finally, another option, close enough to Innsbruck for day-trips though not covered by any of its ski pass deals, is the extensive resort of **Seefeld**, (see below).

Innsbruck, the market town of **Stams** is the seat of Tyrol's grandest abbey. To the east lies **Hall,** a late-Gothic nugget around which are gathered several attractive villages – **Thaur** and **Tulfes** among them. Further down-valley, the high-tech, multimedia **Swarovski Kristallwelten** is the showcase of the crystal empire. Beyond, but still only 30km from Innsbruck, the bustling town of **Schwaz** owes its attractive Altstadt to a silver-mining heritage, preserved in a show-mine. Nearby is the absorbing ethnographical collection of the **Haus der Völker**. The picturesque gorge at **Stans** and the renaissance **Schloss Tratzberg** are other inviting attractions in the vicinity.

Seefeld

Nestling on a mountain plateau high above the north side of the Inn Valley among grassy pastures, forested slopes and rugged peaks, **SEEFELD** is as attractively situated as any Austrian alpine resort. The touristy and slightly snooty village itself is less wonderful – dominated by large luxury hotels, clusters of

Seefeld activities

If you're here in summer, make sure you pick up your free Seefeld **guestcard** when you check into your accommodation – it'll get you money off most of local attractions, including cable cars.

Biking Good cycling routes, particularly for mountain bikes, radiate out from Seefeld. The tourist office sells a map with ride descriptions for €1. You can rent bikes from Fun Sport Frank at Klosterstr 608 (€18 per day).

Hiking Many of the most enticing hikes are accessible from cable cars around Seefeld (see p.481). Otherwise, various summer walking programmes are organized by the tourist office throughout the week. In winter the office provides free maps of the many local paths cleared of snow to create an extensive trail network.

Paragliding Parashuttle (☎0664/1244010) offers tandem flights launching from the Härmelekopf for €100 (including price of lift ticket).

Swimming Outdoors at Strandbad Wildsee; or indoors at the swish Hallenbad Olympia (daily 9.30am–10pm; €9; ☎05212/3220) just south of the centre, with its water slides, whirlpool and sauna.

Skiing Seefeld's ski areas are best suited to beginners and intermediate skiers and are serviced by nineteen lifts and a glut of sophisticated snow-making equipment. The local lift pass, the Seefeld Card, costs €33.50 for one day, and €66 for two days. Those staying longer would be advised to get the Happy Ski Card (3 days €91; 7 days €169.50), which covers the more versatile resorts of Ehrwald (see p.514) and Lermoos as well. Cross-country skiing is Seefeld's biggest winter selling point, with 200km of maintained trails helping make it a good place to learn the sport.

souvenir shops and expensive boutiques – although the horse-drawn Fiakers ferrying visitors around the resort help it retain a certain charm.

Churches are the only things of vintage in town, of which the **Pfarrkirche St Oswald**, dominating the central square, is a real gem. The church has been a pilgrimage centre ever since 1384, when stories circulated of the divine punishment meted out to another Oswald – local magnate Oswald Milser – who insisted a priest give him a special Communion wafer reserved for the clergy. Having scoffed most of the wafer, Milser was swallowed up by a fissure that suddenly appeared in the church floor. Fragments of the wafer snatched from Milser's mouth were deemed to be stained with the blood of Christ and so preserved in a reliquary housed in the **Blutskapelle**, accessible by stairs on the north side. The pinnacled high altar centres on a scene showing the Madonna with St Oswald (with curly hair and holding a cup) standing to her right; the death of St Oswald, together with the fate of his namesake Oswald Milser, are the subjects of reliefs above the south door.

At the southeastern end of the village, the small and delightful onion-domed **Seekirche** stands on a grassy knoll against a backdrop of distant mountains – a picture-postcard setting that's more interesting than the interior of the chapel. Seefeld's only other obvious attraction is **Wildsee**, 1km further south, a small lake surrounded by rushes and rich in wildfowl that's worth wandering round. A pay-to-enter Strandbad and boat-rental facilities lie at the southernmost end of the lake.

The mountains

East of Seefeld's train station, the **Rosshütte funicular** (May to mid-Oct; €14 return to *Rosshütte*, €16 return to Seefelder Joch or Härmelkopf) presents the most dramatic route into the mountains, rising to the 1760-metre

Rosshütte, where there's a great view of the Zugspitze to the northwest and a choice of routes to higher altitudes. From here the Seefelder Jochbahn cable car ascends eastwards to the 2064-metre **Seefelder Joch**, an area of meadow beneath the 2220-metre-high **Seefelder Spitze** – to which there's a reasonably easy fifty-minute walk. Alternatively, take the Härmelkopfbahn cable car southwards from the *Rosshütte* to 2050-metre **Härmelkopf**, where there's an attractive walk down to Seefeld via the **Reither Jochalm**, site of a handy refreshment hut, or a relatively easy eighty-minute uphill walk to the 2239-metre *Nördlinger Hütte*. Once here, you can choose to tackle the medium-difficulty ascent of the 2374-metre **Reither Spitze** (1hr). The Reither Spitze and the Seefelder Spitze are connected by a popular medium-difficulty trail, presenting reasonably fit walkers a tempting circuit, ascending with one cable car then descending by the other; total time for the circuit is about three-and-a-half hours.

Over on the southern side of town, a chairlift (June–Sept & Dec–April; €10.50 return) climbs the slopes of the **Gschwandtkopf**, where the *Ötzihütte* offers refreshments, a small display devoted to "Ötzi" (see p.521), and a farmyard zoo for kids.

Practicalities

Seefeld lies on Bundesstrasse 177, which climbs laboriously out of the Inn Valley at **Zirl,** 12km west of Innsbruck, and heads north towards the German border. It's a route served by some **buses** from Innsbruck, although **trains** en route to Ehrwald and Reutte are more frequent. From the **train station**, walk straight ahead about 200m to find the centrally located **tourist office**, Klosterstr 43 (Mon–Sat 8.30am–6pm, Sun 10am–noon; ⓣ05/08800, ⓦwww.seefeld.com), for English-language information and to book **private rooms** (3). Virtually every house in the village offers tourist **accommodation** of some sort, and the range is broad enough to suit most pockets, although be aware that prices rise by up to fifty percent in winter. At the budget end of the scale, *Haus Waltraud*, Leutacherstr 542 (ⓣ05212/2857; 1), offers pleasant rooms sharing balcony, WC and shower, just west of the centre, whilst *Stark*, Andreas-Hofer-Str 144 (ⓣ05212/2104, Ⓔstark@aon.at; 3), is one block north of the tourist office. Stepping up in price, *Edelweiss*, Klosterstr 176 (ⓣ05212/2304, ⓦwww.seefeld-austria.com; 4), is a cosy pension offering modern rooms in a traditional chalet just west of the Pfarrkirche. The top-of-the-range *Hotel Klosterbräu* (ⓣ05212/2621-0, ⓦwww.klosterbraeu.at; 9), behind the Pfarrkirche in a sixteenth-century monastery, has modern, chalet-style additions plus indoor and outdoor pools.

Despite its reputation as an expensive resort, **eating** out in Seefeld need not be traumatic. Most hotel restaurants offer cheap Tagesmenüs at lunchtime. The *Südtiroler Stube*, Reiterspitzstr 17, serves good, medium to expensive cuisine with local flavour, as well as some Italian dishes, and *Emilia Romagna*, just west of the town centre on Leutascherstrasse, has decent pizzas and pasta dishes, though tables are packed in the cosy dining room.

Of the **bars**, *Café Fledermaus* on Bahnhofstrasse is a nice daytime or evening hangout that offers good toasted or baguette sandwiches and is good for cocktails and live music. The *Britannia Inn*, an English pub serving Austrian beer, is one of the best late-night boozing venues, and is handily located at the back of the building that contains Seefeld's other liveliest nightspots: the Western-themed *Buffalo Saloon*, and *Jeep* **nightclub**. In winter, **après-ski** activities centre around the small *Siglu*, in the *Hotel Klosterbräu*.

The Stubaital

Despite its closeness to the pounding mayhem of the Brenner Pass Autobahn, the yawning **Stubaital** remains a surprisingly tranquil bolt-hole for the full range of alpine pursuits. It's perhaps best known for its year-round glacier **skiing** but also commands a good collection of **mountain bike** and **hiking** routes, particularly the **Stubaier Höhenweg**, a wonderful circuit through a rugged high-alpine landscape which takes around a week to complete, though sections of it can make good day hikes.

The Stubaital is extremely accessible from Innsbruck, via the Brenner Autobahn (€2 toll) or the slower, mellower and free Bundesstrasse 182 (which leaves Innsbruck as Leopoldstrasse) and is connected by numerous buses (line ST) and trains from Innsbruck Hauptbahnhof. If you think you might want to spend several days in the Stubaital, consider the €46 **Stubaicard**, valid for five days, which covers cable-car use (once daily), public pools and transport around the valley and down to Innsbruck. It's available at cable car and tourist offices.

The villages

A number of rather lacklustre **villages** dot the thirty-kilometre long Stubaital – including, from north to south, Schönberg, Mieders, Telfes, Fulpmes and Neustift. None comes out a clear winner in terms of convenience or facilities and accommodation is on hand throughout the valley. However, the largest settlement, **FULPMES**, has the added interest of an overwhelmingly Muslim population. The origins of this lie in a local 1960s and 70s drive to recruit Turkish guestworkers, though a second wave of Muslims arrived as refugees during the 1992–5 Bosnian war. Fulpmes also lies at the base of an extensive network of marked **mountain bike** trails. Its tourist office, Bahnstr 17 (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 8am–5pm, Sun 9am–noon; ⓣ05018/81200, ⓦwww.stubai.at) near the railway station can direct you to private rooms (1–2), or you might hole up in *Gasthaus Gröbenhof* (ⓣ05225/62442, ⓦwww.grobenhof.at; 3) in a pretty spot just west of town and which dishes up good traditional food.

Further south up the valley and around halfway along its length, **NEUSTIFT** is where the **Stubaier Höhenweg** starts and finishes and is a good place to base yourself if you only have time for a day hike. In this case consider getting a taste of the high Alps by using the **Elferlifte** cable car (mid-May to early Nov 9am–4.30pm; ⓣ05226/2270, ⓦwww.elfer.at; €12.20 return) then climbing the Elfterspitze (2505m), a two-hour hike away, or doing a longer circuit of the mountain by linking paths between various Alm huts – including the *Pinnisalsm*, *Karalm* and *Elferhütte*. A good place to **stay** in the centre of Neustift is the inexpensive but well run and central *Pension Gulla*, Schulweg 14, (ⓣ05226/2496, ⓦwww.pension-gulla.at; 2), which, like virtually everything in the village, is an easy walk away from the recreation centre where a pool, sauna and waterside beckon.

At the southern end of the Stubaital, the village of **MUTTERBERG** lies conveniently at the base of the **Stubaigletscherbahn** (daily 8am–4pm; ⓣ05226/8141, ⓦwww.stubaier-gletscher.com; €22.30 return for hikers; €36 a day for skiiers) which ascends to more good hiking along with year-round **glacier skiiing**. The large, modern and well-run *Alpensporthotel Mutterberg* (ⓣ05226/8116, ⓦwww.mutterberg.at; summer 6;winter 9) at the base of the lifts offers ski-in convenience, a pool, sauna and good restaurant.

Hut to hut in the Stubai Alps

The **Stubaier Höhenweg**, a circuit of the Stubaital away from roads and villages, is arguably one of the finest multi-day tours of the Alps, and a perfect introduction to the Austrian hut system (see p.47). With at least one pass to cross on each stage, the route is scenically varied, and challenging in places – several sections use wire ropes to safeguard difficult or potentially dangerous spots. Otherwise trails are reasonably straightforward, if occasionally obscured by late-lying snow. Waymarking is mostly good, and all the huts manned and offering meals, making heavy rucksacks unnecessary. Several stages are only about three hours long, so the circuit can be completed within five or six days by experienced mountain walkers – but the landscape is so fine that it deserves eight. The recommended map is the *Kompass Wanderkarte* no. 83 (Stubaier Alpen Serleskamm), at 1:50,000.

Usually tackled in a clockwise direction, the tour starts from either Neustift or Neder, 15km south of Innsbruck, with **day 1** spent walking south through the green and pastoral Pinnistal as far as Karalm, before climbing over the 2380-metre Pinnisjoch to the *Innsbrucker Hütte* (☎05276/295, ⓦwww.innsbrucker-huette.at) just below the pass. Across the depths of the nearby Gschnitztal lie the limestone Tribulaun peaks, while immediately west above the hut rises Habicht (3277m), whose summit thrills experienced scramblers. More dramatic country lies ahead on **day 2**, as you make your way across a series of ridge spurs in order to reach the *Bremer Hütte* (☎0664/4605831, ⓦwww.bremerhuette.at), simplest and most atmospheric of all the huts on the circuit. Heading west on **day 3**, the route crosses the Simmingjöchl and skirts below the Feuerstein peaks within sight of the Wilder Freiger (3418m) and its glaciers. Wilder Freiger is usually climbed from the next hut, the four-storey *Nürnberger* (☎05226/2492, ⓦwww.nuernbergerhuette.at), while **day 4** leads to the *Sulzenau Hütte* (☎05226/2432, ⓦwww.sulzenau.com), passing immediately below it on a day of tarns, moraine ribs and alpine flowers. From Sulzenau to the *Dresdner Hütte*, on **day 5**, is another short stage, but with two routes to choose from: the most obvious crosses the Peiljoch, but a more challenging way – for experienced climbers with a good head for heights – crosses over the Grosser Trögler (2902m), gaining spectacular views of the region's highest peak, the Zuckerhütl (3507m). The *Dresdner Hütte* (☎05226/8112, ⓦwww.dresdnerhuette.rogen.at), though comfortable and with good food on offer, is set in a landscape devalued by ski machinery, with tows and cableways marching up to glacial ski-grounds. You leave this behind on **day 6** with an eight-hour trek by way of the Grawagrubennieder – at 2881m, the highest crossing on the circuit and with a descent that goes down a loose stony gully – arriving at the next hut, the *Regensburger Hütte* (☎05226/2520, ⓦwww.regensburgerhuette.at), which stands at the mouth of a marshy glen topped by the Ruderhofspitze. Little more than a morning's walk separates Neue Regensburger and the very popular *Franz Senn Hütte* (☎05226/2218, ⓦwww.franzsennhuette.at) via the rocky Schrimmennieder on **day 7**, but it's another fine route and, with a tempting glen to explore, can fill a day. If you've enough time, a second night at *Franz Senn* allows a trip to beautiful Rinnensee, a climb to the Rinnenspitze or a visit to the narrow notch of the Rinnennieder for its amazing contrasting views. The last full day of the walk (**day 8**) counts among the best – after an eleven-kilometre-long hillside traverse above the Oberbergtal, the trail shuffles screes at the foot of the dolomitic Kalkkogel massif before arriving at the *Starkenberger Hütte* (☎05226/2683, ⓦwww.starkenburgerhuette.at), from where you can see a good portion of the whole Stubai circuit. Your last morning is reserved for the knee-troublingly steep descent back to Neustift.

Stams

Travelling **west along the Inn Valley** from Innsbruck you'll pass **Zirl** and **Telfs**, two pleasant market towns where compelling attractions are absent. A better day-trip or place to break a journey is the village of **STAMS**, 40km from Innsbruck and site of the Zisterzienserkloster Stift Stams, a Cistercian abbey that once served as the burial place for the Landesfürsten, or princes of Tyrol.

Its two stocky octagonal ochre towers clearly visible from the train station, **Stift Stams** was founded by Meinhard II of Tirol in the thirteenth century. The exquisite interior of the Baroque **Stiftskirche**, its cream stucco-work and gilded altars bathed in light, is only accessible if you join a tour (hourly tours in German: May 9–11am & 2–5pm; June & Sept 9–11am & 1–5pm; July & Aug 9–11am & 1–5pm; Oct–April 9–11am & 2–4pm; €4; ⓣ5263/56972, ⓦwww.stiftstams.at), which also takes in the eighteenth-century, fresco-adorned *Fürstensaal* or "princely hall" – a kind of opulent reception room. Sunken in the floor of the nave, the Prince's Crypt holds a succession of tombs watched over by statues of those buried here, including Sigismund the Rich's first wife – Scottish princess Eleonore Stuart – and Maximilian I's second wife, Bianca Maria Sforza. Sigismund's father, Duke Friedrich the Penniless, is buried round the corner in the monk's chancel. Visited separately from the guided tour, the **museum** on the first floor of the abbey complex (Tues–Sun noon–5pm; €4) assembles a small but remarkable collection of Gothic altarpieces. Pride of place goes to the anonymous *Grussitafel* of 1390, depicting the Coronation of the Virgin surrounded by saintly figures, and to the fairy-tale-like *Heuperger Altar* of 1426, in which a diamond-shaped central panel featuring the Virgin and Child is surrounded by twenty vivid scenes of holy men and mythical beasts.

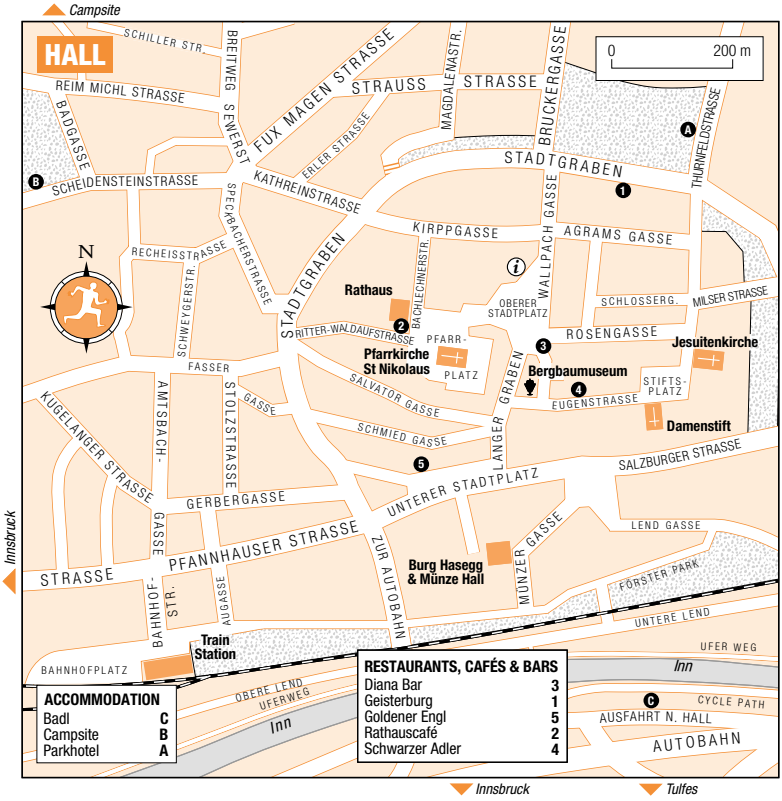
The **restaurant** of the *Alte Schmiede*, just west of the abbey in the village centre, is a good place for a quick lunch or a more substantial evening meal, as well as being a relaxing place for a drink.

Hall and around

HALL preserves one of Austria's best ensembles of late medieval buildings, rivalling those of Innsbruck, 10km away, while only receiving a tiny fraction of its visitors. Not only is it quiet, but the town centre has the charm derived of a lack of attention and a slightly decrepit feel. Yet, at its fifteenth-century peak, Hall was the third largest Austrian city after Vienna and Schwaz, an important trading centre that had grown rich on the proceeds of salt mined in mountains to the north. It was transformed into a major financial centre under Maximilian I's uncle Sigismund the Rich, who moved the Tyrolean mint here from Meran in the 1470s and began production of the *Taler*, a silver coin that became the standard unit of currency in central Europe for a time – and gave its name to today's most used monetary unit, the dollar.

The Altstadt

Hall's main attraction is its late-Gothic **Altstadt**, a compact grid of medieval alleyways that zero in on the **Oberer Stadtplatz**. Immediately west, the thirteenth-century **Pfarrkirche St Nikolaus** is a structure whose interior betrays a curious lack of symmetry, the result of an unfinished fifteenth-century programme of rebuilding. To the left of the high altar, the **Waldaufkapelle** is named after Florian Waldauf, a peasant's son from East Tyrol who rose to



become trusted sidekick of Emperor Maximilian I and was an obsessive collector of holy relics: they now rest in niches along the chapel's northern wall. Behind the church to the east stands the featureless grey **Magdalenskapelle**, which contains some excellent late-Gothic paintings, including a *Last Judgement* filled with the writhing forms of the damned. In the centre of the chapel an **altar** of 1490 displays some extraordinarily vibrant scenes on the wings, illustrating the *Annunciation*, *Adoration of the Magi* and *Death of the Virgin*, together with images of St Barbara and St Agnes, the latter accompanied by her symbol, the lamb.

Immediately north of the Pfarrkirche, the **Rathaus** was built in the fourteenth century by Henry, King of Bohemia and Duke of Tyrol. It was subsequently used as a hunting lodge by Maximilian I, who would set off into the mountains to indulge in the noble art of *Gamsstechen* – impaling chamois on 4.5-metre-long pikes. Visitors can usually enter the building's main ceremonial chamber, the Rathausstube, which preserves its sixteenth-century wood ceiling, although its popularity as a wedding venue means it's rarely open to the public at weekends.

The **Bergbaumuseum**, or mining museum (accessible by tour only; Mon–Sat 11.30pm; buy tickets at the tourist office; €3.50), a block south of Oberer Stadtplatz on the corner of Eugenstrasse, recounts Hall's salt-mining heritage, although the attempt to re-create the atmosphere of underground galleries in the old ducal palace is less than successful. Eugenstrasse heads east

from here to the **Stiftsplatz**, where a fine Baroque facade marks the location of the so-called **Damenstift**, the Carmelite convent founded in 1567 by the Archduchess Magdalena, sister of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol. One of the strictest of all religious orders, Carmelites observed total silence and slept in their own coffins. Diagonally opposite the convent stands the red and ochre facade of the **Jesuitenkirche**, originally attached to a Jesuit monastery also established by Archduchess Magdalena. Its delicate white and gold stuccoed interior is probably the earliest example of Baroque in Tyrol.

Burg Hasegg and the Münze Hall

Hall's famous mint was within the sturdy **Burg Hasegg**, a largely sixteenth-century strongpoint dominating the lower town south of the centre, and now housing the town **museum** (mid-July to mid-Sept daily 2–6pm; €2). It has the usual round-up of local history and folklore, although perhaps more interesting is the fortress chapel, where the marriage of Maximilian I and his second wife Bianca Maria Sforza was confirmed (the original marriage, contracted for purely political reasons, had taken place in Milan in the absence of the groom). A small collection of late-Gothic altarpieces is also up for perusal, one of which, painted by local boy Marx Reichlich (whose *Adoration of the Magi* is in Innsbruck's Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum; see p.474), shows Florian Waldauf being knighted by Emperor Maximilian in the right-hand panel (Maximilian is the one in the red jacket and hat), and Waldauf's wife – herself a major donor to local churches – in the left-hand panel. Those willing to tackle the two hundred steps of the castle's tower, the Münzerturm, are rewarded with sweeping views of Innsbruck's urban sprawl to the west.

Just across the courtyard from the museum is the **Münze Hall** (April–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Nov–March Tues–Sat 10am–5pm; €6), where a commentary (English available), takes you through the history of coin minting in Hall, and throws in some Habsburg history along the way in somewhat Disney-esque fashion. The exhibits provide a pretty thorough economic history of the region's last 500 years, and at the end you can mint your own thaler in the museum shop.

Practicalities

Hall's **train station** is a ten-minute walk southwest of the Altstadt and the extremely helpful **tourist office**, just off the Oberer Stadtplatz at Wallpachgasse 5 (Mon–Fri 8.30am–12.30pm & 2–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ05223/455440, ⓦwww.regionhall.at). They will book **private rooms**, though few are central. Alternatives are the pleasant riverside *Badl*, Haller Innbrücke 4 (ⓣ05223/56784, ⓦwww.badl.at; 4), some of whose bright rooms have views towards the old town. The more business-orientated *Parkhotel*, Thurnfeldgasse 1a (ⓣ05223/53769, ⓦwww.parkhotel-hall.com; 9), is comfortable, modern and very central. There's a **campsite** on Schiedensteinstr (ⓣ05223/45464-75; May–Sept) next to the open-air swimming pool, about 1.5km northwest of the centre.

Probably because Innsbruck is so close there aren't that many **eating** and **drinking** options. The atmospheric *Geisterburg*, Stadtgraben 18, two blocks north of the Oberer Stadtplatz, offers inexpensive Austrian and Italian food, has a nice front garden and serves food until midnight. A small step up in price is the *Schwarzer Adler*, Eugenstrasse 3, which has a top-quality Austrian repertoire and good-value lunchtime Tagesmenüs. *Goldener Engl*, between the centre and train station at Unterer Stadtplatz 5, is another good place to try meaty Austrian favourites. The best **café** is the *Rathauscafé*, which occupies a pair of vaulted Gothic rooms beside the town hall, and serves up tempting sandwiches, lunches and cakes, as well as attracting a hip young crowd in the evenings. Otherwise,

nightlife revolves around the Salvatorgasse, a medieval alleyway south of Pfarrplatz lined with bars.

Thaur and Tulfes

Attractive villages line the sides of the Inn Valley around Hall. The prettiest is **THAUR**, pressed hard against the foot slopes of the Nordkette 3km northwest of Hall. It's known above all for preserving **Tyrolean folk traditions**, and is one of the few places that still marks **Palm Sunday** with a procession involving a life-size effigy of Jesus on a donkey. Once common throughout Austria, such processions were discouraged during the eighteenth-century reign of rationalist Josef II. Festivities in Thaur continue throughout **Holy Week**; a tableau depicting the grave of Christ is placed in the Pfarrkirche, and another procession takes place on **Good Friday**. Thaur is also an important Krippen-making centre (see p.473); local families display theirs either in the Pfarrkirche or at home between December 26 and January 15.

Hiking routes immediately behind Thaur lead up to the Thaurer Alm, but better opportunities for hiking and particularly skiing can be found on the opposite side of the valley around the village of **TULFES**, Innsbruck's nearest dedicated mountain ski resort and accessible by direct bus. Spread across a hillside terrace 6km to the south of Hall, Tulfes is the starting point for a two-stage Glungezer gondola (July & Aug Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 1–4.30pm, Sat & Sun 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm; €6 one way, €8.50 return) to the **Tulfein Alm**, an area of alpine meadow below the area's main peak, the **Glungezer**. The Zirbenweg walk from the top gondola to the top of the Patscherkofel cable car above Igls is a popular, though strenuous, **three-hour** hike, with great views across the valley towards the Nordkette on the opposite side.

Wattens and the Swarovski Kristallwelten

Eight kilometres east of Hall, the more industrialized town of **WATTENS** is home to the high-profile **Swarovski Kristallwelten** (daily 9am–6pm; €9.50; ⓦ www.swarovski.com/crystalworlds), a high-tech, multimedia showcase for the nearby Swarovski factory, a long-standing producer of high-quality optical equipment and ornamental cut-glass animals and figurines that are regarded as rank kitsch by some, prized collectables by others. The entrance is dramatic, hidden beneath a grassy hill landscaped to form a human face – with a waterfall emerging from the mouth. Inside, dizzying psychedelic art installations aim to induce wonder or contemplation. The result is both a vastly entertaining futuristic theme park and a staggeringly vulgar monument to corporate vanity – unsurprisingly the largest exhibition gallery is a gift-shop – but it's unique, and kids will probably love it. Hourly buses from Innsbruck to Schwaz drop you just behind Kristallwelten (the train stops at Fritzens-Wattens, about twenty minutes' walk southeast).

Schwaz and around

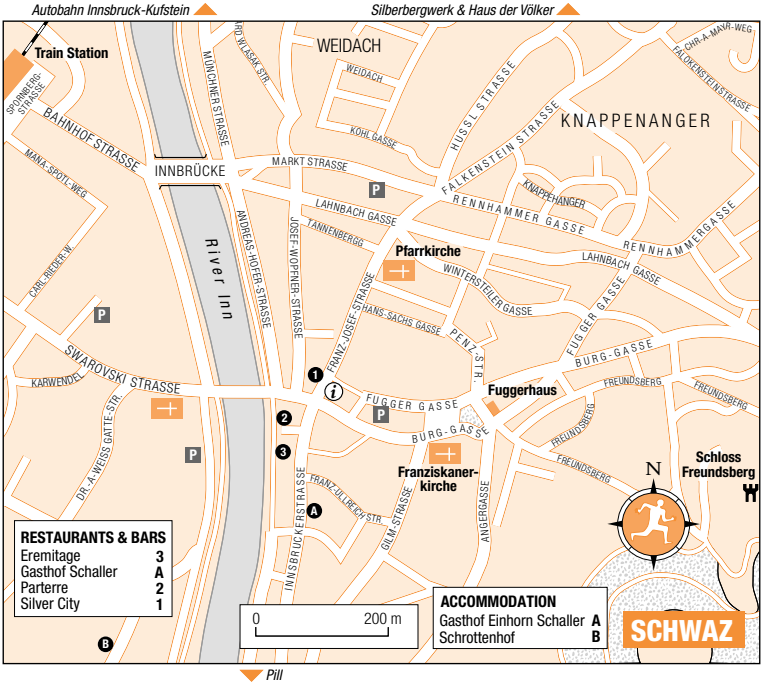
The bustling commercial centre of **SCHWAZ**, 20km east of Hall, bears an equally impressive historical pedigree thanks to having been Tyrol's main **silver** producer, a resource crucial to the upturn of Habsburg fortunes during the reign of Maximilian I. The old silver workings have been transformed into one of Austria's most popular **show-mines**, on the eastern fringes of town, near the unmissable **Haus der Völker**, an intriguing ethnographical collection. Schwaz's town centre, by no means as pretty as those of Hall and Innsbruck,

nevertheless contains a generous sprinkling of late-Gothic sights. A picturesque gorge at **Stans** and the museum at **Schloss Tratzberg** provide the main out-of-town attractions.

The Town

Spreading along the southeastern bank of the River Inn, the Altstadt gathers around the **Pfarrkirche**, with its copper-shingled roof and characteristic crenellated gables. Built during the town's fifteenth-century silver-mining heyday, it was designed to cater for two separate congregations and as a consequence sports two naves: the one on the left was reserved for the burghers, the one on the right for miners. The high altar is twentieth-century neo-Gothic, but the side altar to the left is a fine piece of medieval craftsmanship from 1410, featuring a Madonna and Child wearing elaborately jewelled crowns. At the back of the nave near the entrance, don't miss the baptismal font of 1470, with an exquisitely carved relief of John the Baptist at the base, and the Baroque organ case high above, a cherub-and-statuette-laden affair from the 1730s. Note too, the large plaques around the church entrance listing all those locals lost in the World Wars. Each entry is intriguingly given an exact date and location – showing just how far and wide Schwazers were billetted in the wars, as well as indicating when the town was bombed and to what effect.

From the Pfarrkirche, Franz-Josef-Strasse runs south past town houses with medieval origins, then east into Burggasse where the grand medieval **Fuggerhaus** with traces of eighteenth-century paintings on the outside. From here Burggasse leads uphill towards the twelfth-century **Schloss Freundsberg**, perched on a knoll about a ten-minute walk away. The small castle **museum**



(April–Oct Fri–Wed 10am–5pm; €3) is by no means enthralling, with a modest collection of nineteenth-century wooden furniture, wrought-iron crosses from local graveyards, and late-Gothic wood panelling and paintings.

Haus der Völker

An easy fifteen-minute walk northeast of the Altstadt along Husslstrasse brings you to the splendid **Haus der Völker** (daily 10am–6pm; €6; ⓦwww.hausdervoelker.com), a museum housing the private collections of Gert Chesi, a local photojournalist who mostly worked in Africa and Southeast Asia and collected traditional artefacts along the way. An extensive range of Thai and Burmese wood sculpture, some colourful Yoruba masks and a group of statuettes from Togo representing voodoo deities and fetish figures standing in a ceremonial boat are among the displays. The exhibit of doctors' advertising billboards is particularly fun, consisting of graphic depictions of medical complaints, common and otherwise (such as diarrhoea, painful periods and being cursed by devils), used to lure patients for treatment. The museum's *Ethno-Café* occasionally has evenings devoted to African or Mexican cuisine.

The Silberbergwerk

Another ten-minute walk along Husslstrasse from **Haus der Völker**, lie Schwaz's old silver workings, the **Silberbergwerk** (daily: May–Sept 9am–5pm; Oct–April 10am–4pm; €15; ⓦwww.silberbergwerk.at), one of Austria's most popular **show-mines**. It offers an exhilarating kilometre-long train ride into the mine, followed by an hour-long walking tour of the interior. The somewhat lengthy explanation of the mine's history, focusing particularly on the extreme lengths the workers went to keep the mine water-free, won't appeal to everyone, but the chance to get deep inside the mountain, and to take the train in and out through the narrow tunnel, make it worthwhile. Tours are in German, although English-language headsets are provided at each stop along the way.

Practicalities

From the **train station** the centre of town is a ten-minute walk southeast. Most **buses** stop at the station, some just by the Innbrücke. The **tourist office**, in the town hall at Franz-Josef-Str 2 (June–Sept Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon; Oct–May Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ05242/63240, ⓦwww.schwaz-info.at), will direct you to **private rooms**. Otherwise farmhouses are among the best bargins and *Schrottenhof*, Dr. Weissgattererstr 16 (ⓣ05242/1256; ❶), is one of the few near the town centre, offering large rooms with shared facilities in a peaceful, rural spot just across the river. In town, *Gasthof Einhorn Schaller*, Innsbruckerstr 31 (ⓣ05242/74047, ⓦwww.gasthof-schaller.com; ❹), has good value en suites with TV in an atmospheric old inn that offers a great selection of Tyrolean food, as well as Austrian regulars, in a nice wood-panelled room. Further **restaurants** and **bars** cluster at the centre of the Altstadt, including *Silver City*, Franz-Josef-Strasse, a café-bar decorated like a Western saloon where you can chow down on pizzas, wings or Kaiserschmarren. *Parterre*, by the river on Andreas-Hofer-Strasse, caters for a dressier clientele, while the cosiest and most laid-back drinking hole is the *Eremitage*, Innsbruckerstr 14, a fashionable first-floor bar with occasional live jazz.

Stans and Schloss Tratzberg

On the northern side of the valley, 3km from Schwaz, the village of **STANS** is worth a visit for its **Wölfsklamm** (May–Oct daily dawn–dusk; €3), a small but impressive stretch of gorge spanned by wooden walkways immediately north of

the village centre. It's an outing that's easily combined with a visit to **Schloss Tratzberg** – another 3km east of Stans – one of Maximilian I's former hunting lodges. It's only accessible by hour-long guided tour (mid-March to Oct daily 10am–4pm; €9; ⓦwww.schloss-tratzberg.at) to view the many rooms with intricate Renaissance wooden ceilings. The walls of one sixteenth-century room bear frescoes depicting a genealogical tree of the Habsburg dynasty, its branches embellished with portraits of 148 family members, beginning with Rudolf I, the first of the family to don the Holy Roman crown.

The Unterland

West along the Inn Valley and out of Innsbruck's immediate range, Tyrol's **Unterland** becomes much quieter. The big draws are no longer towns but attractive alpine side valleys. The most significant valley in the north is home to **Achensee**, Tyrol's biggest lake, which in summer offers a lazy waterside backdrop for various activities; in winter it's a premier cross-country skiing centre. On the opposite southern side of the Inn Valley lies the **Zillertal**, arguably the most breathtaking valley in the Unterland and well known for all classic alpine activities – including skiing, possible here year-round. Beyond the mouth of the Zillertal, the Inn Valley heads west towards the **Kaisergebirge**, a cluster of impressive limestone peaks. Though far less built up than around Innsbruck, this stretch of the valley still harbours interesting old towns such as late-Gothic **Rattenberg**, and the fortress town of **Kufstein** on Bavaria's border. The latter is in striking distance of a range of small villages and ski resorts lying around **Kitzbühel**, the famously fashionable society ski resort in Tyrol's south-eastern corner.

The only quick overland route east–west through the region is along the Inn Valley. However the public transport network is up to the usual Austrian slick standards, so the only real snag is that two of the region's major transport hubs are dull and entirely missable: **Jenbach** – for the Achensee and Zillertal – and **Wörgl** for routes towards Kitzbühel.

Achensee

Framed by the Karwendel Mountains to the west and the Rofan range to the east, Tyrol's largest lake, **Achensee** (ⓦwww.achensee.com), nestles in the **Achental**, a highland valley on the north side of the Inn. The region is famous for **Steinöl**, a foul-smelling ointment made from shale once mined on the shores of the lake and used to treat rheumatism, arthritis, tennis elbow and skin complaints. It's sold in local pharmacies and gift-shops, with an especially large range in the Steinöl Museum in Pertisau (see p.493). There's little to choose between the resort villages edging **Achensee's** shore – **Maurach**, **Pertisau** and **Achenkirch** – which all have good beaches and watersports facilities, notably for wind- and kite-surfing. In the winter, there's little downhill skiing, but plentiful cross-country skiing on 200km of routes along the valley floor and

between the Karwendel Mountains. The **Summer Card** (€49 for 7 days; available from tourist offices) is worth considering if you're spending any length of time in the area; it includes boat and cable-car use, along with entry to Swarovski Kristallwelten (see p.489).

The villages

Situated 5km north of Jenbach, the village of **MAURACH** occupies the high ground just short of the lake's southern end, where there are a couple of Strandbäder and a range of boat-rental outlets. An hour's leisurely walk from Maurach, 5km along the eastern side of the lake, **PERTISAU** is perhaps the most commercialized of Achensee's resorts: an agglomeration of souvenir shops and big chalet-style hotels set against the backdrop of the **Karwendel Alps**. Near the tourist office, a modern glass building houses the **Steinöl Museum** (daily 9.30am–6pm; €4.80) which is probably only worth it if you're a convert to the treatment. Pertisau is the starting point for two scenic **toll roads** (both open May–Oct; €2.50–3.50), heading up into the mountain valleys of the Karwendel massif; one ascends to the **Gramaialm** hut 7km to the southwest; the other to the **Gernalm**, 5km northwest of town.

Unlike Pertisau, **ACHENKIRCH**, at the northern end of the lake, has preserved something of its traditional character. The lakefront (site of a beach, boat rental and windsurfing school) is about 2.5km south of the village centre, and where a small **Heimatmuseum** (May–Oct daily 1–5pm; €3.50), displays local costumes and agricultural implements. The eight-kilometre **walk** from Achenkirch to Pertisau along the traffic-free western side of the lake is a popular local excursion, although the stage between Achenkirch and Gaisalm, about three-quarters of the way down the lake (and where boats also leave from), is reasonably challenging. North of Achenkirch, the road climbs to the German frontier 10km distant, from where there's a choice of onward routes (though no public transport) to the Bavarian towns of Tegernsee and Bad Tölz.

Practicalities

Buses from Jenbach and Schwaz (see p.489) are the best way to the lake from the Inn Valley. Jenbach is also the starting point for the **Achenseebahn** (May & Oct 3 daily; June–Sept 7 daily; Ⓦwww.achenseebahn.at), a cog railway served by steam trains that climbs up to Maurach, though ticket prices are relatively high (Jenbach–Maurach return €28). The main towns in the region are linked by hourly buses, which are free if you show your hotel guestcard.

All three villages have plentiful accommodation though you're most likely to want to stay in the busier and more interesting Pertisau or Achenkirch. The village tourist office in each can help find **private rooms** (❷) and beds in **farmhouses** (❶); the one at Maurach (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat 9am–noon & 3–5pm; Ⓣ05243/5355), 100m east of the main road, will likely be the most convenient if you're arriving from the Inn Valley by car. *Wirthaus am See*, (Ⓣ05243/55590, Ⓦwww.strandhotel.at; ❺), on the lakefront next to Pertisau's landing stage, stands out as one of Achensee's best traditional **hotels**, where the cosy en-suite rooms all have balconies, some facing the water. In Achenkirch the modern, chalet-style *Zillertaler Hof*, Achenkirch 104 (Ⓣ05246/6396, ❺), midway between the village centre and the lakefront, has good en-suite rooms with balconies, a pizzeria downstairs and a sauna.

The best lakeside **campgrounds** are in Maurach and Achenkirch: *Seecamping Wimmer*, Buchau 8 (Ⓣ05243/5217), lies just off the northbound Achenkirch road in Maurach; *Terrassencamping Schwarzenau* (Ⓣ05246/6568) is further up the

road, halfway to Achenkirch; and *Camping Achensee* (☎05246/6239) sits at the northernmost end of Achensee.

The Zillertal

Backed by the impressive wall of the Zillertaler Alps and fed by a succession of deep, picturesque side-valleys, the **Zillertal** is the most versatile alpine vacation area east of Innsbruck. Long favoured by the winter ski-package crowd, especially the British, it's become very commercialized. Of the valley's principal centres, **Zell am Ziller** retains something of its traditional character, while **Mayrhofen** is solely a tourist town – full of cosmopolitan life in winter, crammed with tourists over the summer, and fairly soulless in between. On the plus side, the scenery is grandiose, and all the facilities required for an outdoor alpine holiday close at hand.

In winter (Dec–April), both Mayrhofen and Zell am Ziller offer well-equipped if crowded **ski resorts** ideal for beginners and intermediates. Most of the more challenging black runs are concentrated in Hintertux – 20km from

Zillertal passes and activities

For those staying any length of time in the Zillertal in **summer**, it's worth investing in a **Zillertal Card** (sometimes called a Z-Ticket), which includes travel on all cable cars, gondolas and chairlifts (one per day) in the Zillertal region (including the Isskogel cable car at the Gerlos Pass) together with use of open-air swimming pools (also one per day) and public transport in the valley. A six-day pass costs €39.80, although nine-day (€54.80) and twelve-day (€68.40) variants are also available. The pass can be purchased from tourist offices and train stations. In **winter**, ski passes include use of all buses.

Cycling The Zillertal tourist offices produce a list of suggested rides in the valley with two accompanying maps (€2 each) which also include information on which chairlifts take bikes to enable cable-car assisted loops. The Mayrhofen tourist office also organizes free weekly guided bike tours. Bikes can be rented at the BP-Tankstelle Obermair, Am Marktplatz 213, Mayrhofen (☎05285/62308), and SB-Markt Josef Huber, Gerlosstr 30, Zell am Ziller (☎05282/2220). The Zillertalbahn also rent out bikes (€12 for a whole day, €8 for a half day) from most stations, apart from Jenbach and Aschau, which can be returned to any other station, making it possible to cycle just one way down the valley. They'll also transport your bike for free on the train.

Hiking Both the Mayrhofen and Zell am Ziller tourist offices organize guided walks daily (May–Oct), free for those with a hotel guest card, and sell walking maps. In summer there are hundreds of kilometres of trails, and even in winter 60km of marked routes are cleared for hiking. The Alpinschule Mount Everest (see "Rock climbing") offer more challenging walks, and can arrange guides to cater for most requests, while Mountain Sports Zillertal (see under "Canyoning") offer hiking tours of the glacier involving abseiling and crampons.

Kayaking Wildwasserschule Mayrhofen (☎0664/3588435) offers courses for beginners and intermediates either on the Zemmbach immediately south of Mayrhofen or downstream on the Ziller.

Paragliding Flugtaxi Mayrhofen (☎05285/2055011, ⓦwww.action-club-zillertal.com), Stocky Air (☎0664/3139800, ⓦwww.stockyair.com), located on good flying days in a yellow cable car by the Penkenbahn gondola station, and Mountain Sports Zillertal (see "rafting") all offer passenger flights, where you'll be strapped in tandem with an experienced pilot, from around €60. Prices depend on where the flight starts – departures from higher altitudes obviously stay in the air longer. If you fancy

Mayrhofen and linked by plenty of buses – where glacier-skiing is possible year-round on the Tuxertal glacier and where dramatic descents are coupled with spectacular roof-of-the-Alps views.

In summer, **walking** opportunities are particularly varied: the whole valley is well served by cable cars and chairlifts, most of which operate over the summer, making it easy for the most reluctant of hikers to reach high altitudes with the minimum of effort. Although the heights immediately above Mayrhofen and Zell am Ziller are the easiest to access, much wilder alpine territory beckons in the side-valleys to the south, with the **Stilluppgrund**, **Zemmgrund**, **Zamsergrund** and **Tuxertal** all particularly rewarding. Regional **hiking maps** can be purchased at the Zell am Ziller and Mayrhofen tourist offices: the Kompas 1:50,000 *Zillertaler Alpen & Tuxer Voralpen* covers the whole valley, while the same publisher's 1:25,000 *Mayrhofen-Tuxertal-Zillergrund* map offers more detailed coverage of the region's southern end.

Transport up the valley is provided by the privately owned Zillertalbahn railway, a narrow-gauge line that runs every hour from **Jenbach** in the Inn Valley (all trains on the main Vienna–Salzburg–Innsbruck route stop here) to

learning the sport contact the Zillertaler Flugschule (☎0664/1802483, ⓦwww.zillertaler-flugschule.com).

Rafting and canyoning Action Club Zillertal, Hauptstrasse 458, Mayrhofen (☎05285/62977, ⓦwww.action-club-zillertal.com), organize trips for those eager to abseil, swim, slide and raft down streams and waterfalls from €24–79 depending on length of trip. Mountain Sports Zillertal, Haupstr 456, Mayrhofen (☎0664/312-0266, ⓦwww.mountain-sports-zillertal.com), also offers a good range of tours for around the same prices.

Rock climbing Bergsportschule Tux, Juns 545 Mayrhofen (☎05287/873372, ⓦwww.bergsportschule-tux.at), offers climbing courses on rocks near the Spannagelhaus beside the Hintertux Glacier, as well as climbing in ice crevasses on the glacier itself. Alpinschule Mount Everest, Hauptstr 458, Mayrhofen (☎05285/62829, ⓦwww.habeler.com), organize day courses for intermediate climbers on the Penkenjoch above the village, whilst Mountain Sports Zillertal (see "Canyoning") offers introductory climbing lessons and easy guided climbs.

Skiing The main areas are the Ahorn (with plenty of practice slopes for beginners) and the Penken (with numerous short intermediate runs). Longer intermediate runs, and more challenging black runs, are concentrated above Hintertux, where the Tuxertal glacier is open for year-round skiing. Ski passes are many and varied: most flexible is the Zillertaler Superskipass (4 days €123; 7 days €193), which includes all lifts in the Zillertal and Tuxertal, including the Tuxertal glacier. A shorter version of the Zillertaler Superskipass covers everything except the Tuxertal glacier, although only up to three and a half days (1 day €37.50, three and a half days €109). Other passes, available year round, cover the Tuxertal glacier on its own (1 day €31, 2 days €58, 3 days €82.50). Equipment can be hired at lift stations or at sports shops throughout the valley: daily rates are around €15 for skis, €15 for snowboards, and a further €8 for boots. Discounts are offered for longer periods.

Swimming and tennis Erlebnisbad Mayrhofen, Waldbadstr 539 (☎05285/62559, ⓦwww.erlebnisbad-mayrhofen.at), has an outdoor pool, water slides, indoor pool, sauna and solarium; Freizeitpark, Zell am Ziller, at the southern end of town by the river bank (☎05282/191630), sports a large outdoor pool with water slides, outdoor and indoor courts.

▲ Zillertal

Mayrhofen, 30km away at the head of the Zillertal. A special steam-hauled train (Jenback–Zell: €10.70 one way) also runs twice a day in summer, once daily in winter. From Mayrhofen, buses convey travellers into the highland valleys further south.

Zell am Ziller

Twenty kilometres south of Jenbach, the village of **ZELL AM ZILLER** is the obvious base from which to explore the mountains of the middle Zillertal. Cable cars to the **Gerlosstein** and the **Kreuzjoch** are within easy reach of Zell

itself, while further lifts in the **Gerlos Valley** are only a short car or bus ride away. Comparatively free from the package tourism of Mayrhofen further up the valley, it's a quiet little place enlivened each May by a descent into the alcohol-fuelled revelry of the **Gauderfest** (see box p.498).

There's little to actually see or do in the village itself, although the **Pfarrkirche** is worth a quick peek. Ceiling paintings by Franz-Anton Zeiller (another member of the prolific Zeiller brood of Reutte; see p.516) overlook the unusual circular nave, and near the door a sixteenth-century fresco of St Veronica, depicting the cloth with which she mopped Christ's brow and on which his features subsequently appeared, is worth seeking out.

Most direct route to higher altitudes, the **Kreuzjochbahn** gondola (mid-June to early Oct 8.40am–5.10pm; one way €10.80, return €16.40) rises from the northeasternside of the village to a middle station at the 1039-metre **Wiesenalm** (also accessible by road), followed by a second stage to the 1760-metre **Rosenalm** in the shadow of the Kreuzjoch itself. From here, numerous hiking trails lead back down to the valley or to the various *Hütte* (which are signposted, together with an indication of walking time) offering traditional food and drink in rustic surroundings.

Practicalities

Turn right outside the train station to reach the **tourist office**, Dorfplatz 3a (Mon–Fri 8.30am–12.30pm & 2.30–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 4–6pm; ⓣ05282/2281, ⓦwww.zell.at), in the centre of the village, which can fix you up with **private rooms** (2), many in hillside suburbs west of town. Among the cheaper **pensions**, *Haus Christine*, Gerlosstr 8b (ⓣ05282/2688; 2), has good value rooms just off Dorfplatz. Those with their own transport might consider the *Alpengasthof Enzianhof*, Gerlosberg 23 (ⓣ05282/2237; choice of dorm beds or doubles 3), a combination of hotel and mountain hut located at the top of a winding road on the hillside east of town. Of the bigger central hotels, *Hotel Garni Maximilian*, Bahnhofstr 24 (ⓣ05282/2255; 4), a modern chalet-style building just south of the train station, has balconied rooms with en-suite facilities and TV, as well as the *Piccadilly Pub* on the premises if you need a bit of on-site recreation; while *Sporthotel Theresa*, Bahnhofstr 15 (ⓣ05282/22860, ⓦwww.theresa.at; 9), is probably the swishest in town, with indoor pool, sauna and tennis. *Camping Hofer*, Gerlosstr 33 (ⓣ05282/2248; 1), is an attractive place to pitch your tent on the Gerlos Pass road, 400m southeast of the centre, and has some simple double rooms too.

For **eating**, the restaurant at *Hotel Bräu*, Dorfplatz 1, stands out above the rest, with a range of food – Tyrolean fare, Austrian favourites and excellent fish – to suit all pockets. For something a bit different, try the generous portions at *Pablo's Pizzeria* in the *Hotel Zellerhof*, near the train station at Bahnhofstr 3.

The road to the Gerlos Pass

Zell am Ziller is the western starting point for one of Austria's most scenic cross-mountain road routes (served by five buses a day), over the **Gerlos Pass**. The most fearsome stretch of the route is on the outskirts of Zell itself, as the road zigzags its way out of the valley onto the terrace above, where the seventeenth-century **Wallfahrtskirche Maria Rast** (a popular 45-minute walk out from Zell am Ziller) sits on a mountain spur overlooking the valley. A couple of hairpin bends further up the mountain lies the village of **HAINZENBERG**, site of a small **Tierpark**, where examples of the local fauna – goats, mouflon, chamois and deer – are assembled for your inspection.

The Gauderfest and Almabtrieb

Celebrated every year on the first weekend in May, the four-hundred-year-old **Gauderfest** is thought to have been invented by local brewers keen to publicize their ale, although a whole range of previously existing folk rituals have become associated with the festival over the years. Processions, various sporting contests (including wrestling) and the prodigious consumption of alcohol and food all serve to mark the beginning of the summer cycle of the agricultural year – beware the deceptively strong **Gauder beer**, brewed for the occasion. The end of summer is marked by the **Almabtrieb**, also a big deal in the Zillertal and held in each valley village in turn on weekends in late September and early October. The occasion celebrates the return of the cows from the alpine pastures – cows with headdresses are driven through streets during a festival of much merrymaking and heavy drinking.

▲ Almabtrieb

At the eastern end of Hainzenberg the **Gerlossteinbahn** (late May to mid-Oct daily 8.45am–12.15pm & 1–5pm; €9.80 return) cable car ascends to the *Gerlossteinhütte*, overlooked by the rugged face of the 2166-metre **Gerlossteinwand**.

The village of **Gmund**, 25km beyond Zell, is linked by the Fürstalmbahn chairlift (July to mid-Sept Wed–Sun 9am–noon & 1–5pm; €10.80 return) to the higher slopes on the southern side of the valley. From here it's only 3km to the next village, **GERLOS**, on the far side of which is the Isskogelbahn chairlift (mid-June to mid-Oct 9am–noon & 1–5pm; €9.80 return), serving the alpine meadows above the valley to the north. A steady ten-kilometre climb from Gerlos brings you eventually to the **Durlassboden Reservoir**, where the 1531-metre summit of the Gerlos Pass marks the border between Tyrol and Salzburg. From here the road descends into the upper Salzach Valley and the Krimmlo Wasserfälle (see p.418), then continues to the Pinzgau towns of Mittersill and Zell am See (p.412).

Mayrhofen

MAYRHOFEN, 10km south of Zell, is one of Austria's biggest resort villages. Almost entirely dependent on package tourism, its rustic character lies buried beneath successive layers of fake alpine charm and gift-shop tawdriness. Yet, whatever its shortcomings, Mayrhofen remains the ideal place from which to explore the **Gründe** that fan out to the south, as well as the range of mountains more immediately at hand. The **Penkenbahn** gondola (mid-May to early Oct daily 9am–5pm; return €14.50, combined with Ahornbahn €23) climbs the flanks of the Penken from a terminal at the southern end of Mayrhofen Hauptstrasse (the Finkenberger Almbahn approaches the same uplands from a different direction; see p.501), providing access to numerous **walks**. The **Ahornbahn** gondola (early June to mid-Oct daily 8.30am–5pm; return €14.50, combined with **Penkenbahn** €23) on the southeastern fringes of town scales the opposite side of the valley towards the Ahornspitze, where you can enjoy yet more fine views from the terrace of the *Ahornhütte* at the top of the gondola, or contemplate a range of well-signposted walks. One relatively easy one-hour hike takes you to the *Edelhütte* to the southeast, which sits on sparse mountain grasslands close up to the 2973-metre Ahornspitze itself.

Practicalities

Mayrhofen's **train station** is five minutes west of the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat 9am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 9am–noon; ⓣ05285/6760, ⓦwww.mayrhofen.at) in the Europahaus congress centre, which handles **private rooms** (summer ❸; winter ❹).

Innumerable **hotels** and **pensions** offer decent-value accommodation, although many of these are block-booked by groups in winter and at the height of summer. *Gästehaus & Campingstüberl*, Laubichl 127 (ⓣ05285/62580-52, ⓦwww.alpenparadies.com), offers cosy en suites (❹) alongside rooms with shared facilities (❸) and a year-round campsite in Laubichl, a ten-minute walk from the centre of town (turn left before you reach the tourist office, past the Esso garage). Of the smaller pensions, *Auf der Wiese*, Schmiedwiese 170 (ⓣ05285/64576; ❷), is a nice balconied farmhouse 1km north of town (from the train station, turn left and follow the main road for five minutes) offering cosy en-suite rooms, while *Hoamatl*, Dorf Haus 758 (ⓣ05285/62749, ⓔchristine@zline.at; ❷), is a big suburban house at the southwestern end of town with a mix of shared facilities and en-suite options. Moving up in price, *Hotel Robert*, Dursterstr 255 (ⓣ05285/62896; summer ❸; winter ❹), just west of the tourist office, is a modern place built in fanciful chalet style where balconied rooms come with en-suite facilities and TV, and there's a sauna and gym on site. The *Kramerwirt*, Am Marienbrunnen 346 (ⓣ05285/6700, ⓦwww.kramerwirt.at; summer ❻; winter ❼), has the most character in town, an old inn with modern en-suite rooms and some lovely wood-panelled breakfast and dining areas. The more modern *Sporthotel Strass*, Hauptstr 470 (ⓣ05285/6705, ⓦwww.hotelstrass.com; summer ❼; winter ❾), is a large chalet-style place with the kind of plush rooms that you would expect at this price, plus indoor pool, fitness centre and grassy kids' play area.

As a rule, **food** in Mayrhofen is more expensive and mediocre than anywhere else in the Tyrol, although there are notable exceptions. *Mamma Mia* in the *Elisabeth Hotel* on Einfahrt Mitte 432, just west of the Hauptstrasse, offers a perfectly acceptable range of pizza and pasta favourites; while *Singapore*, Scheulingstr 371, is a dependable Chinese place with tempting €7 lunchtime menus, and other main courses from €8.50. Best for high-quality Tyrolean specialities and the full range of Austrian cuisine are the *Kramerwirt*,

Am Marienbrunnen, a traditional *Gasthof* with wood-panelled rooms, and the *Wirtshaus zum Griena*, at the southern end of town at Dorf Haus 768. Consider the *Neuhaus*, Am Marktplatz (☎05285/6703), if you fancy splashing out on some excellent fish and game dishes.

Konditorei Kostner, Hauptstr 414, is a relaxed place in which to enjoy a daytime **drink**, as well as offering the best selection of pastries and cakes in town. The considerably funkier *Mo's*, Hauptstr 417, is thronged with drinkers both day and night and is also a good place to eat, with inexpensive pizza and pasta, a wide range of salads, cheap baked potatoes and take-away sandwiches. *Scotland Yard*, Scheulingstr 372, is an enjoyable pub with friendly staff, a wide range of Austrian ales on tap, and toasted-sandwich and french-bread-pizza snacks, whilst the *Ice Bar* and *Speak Easy Disco* in *Sporthotel Strass* attracts a sizeable drinking crowd at weekends – it's open daily until 4am.

Beyond Mayrhofen

Immediately south of Mayrhofen, mountain roads provide access to four side-valleys feeding the Zillertal: the Zillergrund, the Stilluppgrund, the Zemmgrund and the **Tuxertal**. All provide excellent walks and are served by buses from Mayrhofen train station.

Eight buses a day head up the **Zillergrund**, a narrow valley rising to the east of Mayrhofen with the **Ahornspitze** looming above it to the south. For private cars the road ends at *Gasthof Bärenbad* 15km out of Mayrhofen, while buses climb the extra 2km to the Zillergrund Reservoir. The two-hour trail to *Planauer Hütte* up above the reservoir's northern side is a popular medium-difficulty hike.

Southeast of Mayrhofen, the tranquil **Stilluppgrund** is accessible via toll road (May–Oct; €6.50 per vehicle), and is served by a couple of privately operated minibus services (June–Sept; check with the Mayrhofen tourist office for times and pick-up points). One bus goes to the *Gasthof Wasserfälle* on the banks of the **Stillupp Reservoir** 8km up the valley (also the end of the road for private cars); another goes all the way to the *Grüne-Wand-Hütte* a further 7km up. From here you can follow hiking trails that lead further up the valley, the relatively gentle 2hr ascent to the *Kasseler-Hütte*, squatting up on the shoulder of the high Zillertaler Alpen, being one of the most popular; or walk back to *Gasthof Wasserfälle* to pick up a bus down to Mayrhofen.

Another route into the mountains from Mayrhofen is the scenic road into the **Zemmgrund** due south of town, for much of the year only passable as far as the *Breitlahnerhütte,* 18km south of Mayrhofen. It's a popular rock-climbing area for the experienced, and the starting point for walks into the upper Zemmgrund, which veers away to the southeast. The path up the Zemmgrund is relatively easy going, the main destinations to aim for being the *Alpenrosehütte* (2hr 30min away) and the *Berliner Hütte* another 30 minutes further on; try and make it as far as the latter if you can – it commands excellent views of the Hormkees glacier to the south.

Southwest of the *Breitlahnerhütte*, a toll road (June–Sept only; cars €10) winds tortuously up another side-valley – the **Zamsergrund** – to the **Schlegeis reservoir** 6km further on. Most people end up at *Gasthaus Dominikushütte* on the reservoir's western bank (walkable from the *Breitlahnerhütte* in about two hours), a convenient snack stop with a choice of onward hiking routes. The most enticing is the two-hour medium-difficulty trek through the startlingly bleak upper Zamsergrund to the *Pfitscherjochhaus*, bang on the Italian border 6km to the southwest.

The Tuxertal

Of all the valleys south of Mayrhofen, the **Tuxertal** is the most touristy, thanks largely to the presence of year-round skiing on the **Tuxer Glacier** at the valley's head. Both the glacier and the resort villages in the valley below are well served by gondolas and chairlifts, providing a wealth of alpine itineraries.

The first stop from Mayrhofen, 3km to the west, is the village of **Finkenberg**, where the two-stage **Finkenberger Almbahn gondola** (late May to early Sept daily 8.45am–5pm; €13.20 return) serves the southern approaches to the Penken. Eight kilometres further up the valley, the village of Vorlanersbach fades imperceptibly into **Lanersbach**, the main settlement of the Tuxertal, home to the Tuxertal **tourist office** on Dorfplatz (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–6pm, Sat 8am–noon; ⓣ05287/8506, ⓦwww.tux.at). Lanersbach's **Eggalmbahn gondola** (early June to mid-Oct 8.30am–noon & 1–4.30pm; €9 return) offers a direct route to the slopes of the Tuxer Alps, delivering passengers to the *Eggalm* café-restaurant, in meadows just above the treeline and an excellent staging post for the wilder mountain pastures above. Most popular – and easiest – of the walks from Eggalm is the descent to the Brandalm hut just to the south (1hr), renowned for its fine view of the white expanse of the Tuxer glacier. From the Brandalm hut you can return to Lanersbach in about an hour.

Eight kilometres further on, pressed hard against a sheer rocky slope which marks the end of the valley, the village of **HINTERTUX** is an almost exclusively four-star hotel settlement catering for those eager to ski the **Tuxer Glacier** directly above. The glacier is reached by means of the **Zillertaler Gletscherbahn** (open all year round; €23.60 return, day pass €32.50; ⓦwww.hintertuxergletscher.at), a three-section gondola system that initially ascends to the 2100-metre **Sommerbergalm** café-restaurant, before continuing to the 2660-metre **Tuxer-Ferner-Haus**, which overlooks the glacier itself. After this, the Gletscherbus (a gondola with big cabins) speeds you onwards, providing a fantastic panorama of the surrounding mountains on the way up: on good days, views stretch to the Zugspitze in the north and the Dolomites in the south. From the top, just below the rocky summit of the 3286-metre **Gefrorne Wand**, you'll find another café with viewing platform from which you can feast upon vistas of the surrounding Zillertaler Alps, and of course the glacier, which stretches out to the northwest. If you've just come up here for the view, remember to take warm clothing; even in summer temperatures struggle to rise above 5 degrees.

If you're here to hike, it's best to do so from the Sommerbergeralm (€6.50 one way, €7 return), from where a wide choice of potential hiking destinations are accessible. The Bichlalm, an easy ninety-minute descent to the northwest, boasts a refreshment hut and is a nice spot to enjoy views of Hintertux. The more energetic can attempt the one-hour uphill trek from the Sommerbergeralm to the 2310-metre **Tuxerjochhaus** via the Weitental, a highland valley known for wild flowers. You can also walk all the way up to the Tuxerjochhaus from Hintertux (2hr 30min) if you wish.

The Kaisergebirge and around

Dominating the skyline of northeastern Tyrol, the jagged limestone **Kaisergebirge** divides into two easily identifiable ridges: the **Zahmer** (or "tame") **Kaiser** and, just south of it, the bleak and looming **Wilder Kaiser**. Their footslopes offer enough wild nature – and good hiking, biking and skiing – to lure Bavarians south of the nearby German border in numbers. Bisected by all

the main transport routes, the Inn Valley hugs the northern edge of the region and contains the main towns of historic interest, particularly quaint Gothic **Rattenberg** and the bustling fortress town **Kufstein**, the area's main hub. Between them lie two valley systems – the **Alpbachtal** and the **Wildschönau** – that belie the region's bustling popularity by offering a tranquil landscape despite having plenty of trails and facilities.

The great outdoors even begins on Kufstein's immediate fringes, in a string of lakes northwest of town – of which **Thiersee**, **Hechtsee** and **Hintersteinersee** are the most touristy – and on the **Wilder Kaiser**, where hiking is the main draw. Southeast of Kufstein, the footslopes of the Wilder Kaiser are home to the resort villages of **Söll**, **Scheffau** and **Ellmau**: popular winter **ski** destinations served by buses plying the Kufstein–St Johann and Wörgl–St Johann routes.

But the region's main tourist draw is **Kitzbühl**, the world-famous high-society ski town. In winter it may not be to everyone's taste or pocket, but outside prime times the town has a snug likeable feel and a winning combination of top-class hiking and biking on its doorstep and cosy places to unwind after a day in the mountains.

Rattenberg and around

Squeezed between a cliff-face and the Inn, the small town of **RATTENBERG** was an important silver-mining centre until the seventeenth century and retains a delightful Altstadt. The town also possesses a strong glass-making tradition, and its souvenir shops – most selling the wares of the prime local glassware producer, Kisslinger – have made the place a popular day-trip.

Paths from Rattenberg's **train station** lead straight down to the **Hauptplatz**, an extraordinarily photogenic huddle of medieval town houses resplendent in pink, yellow and greenish hues, with a ruined hilltop castle serving as a backdrop. Bienerstrasse leads south from the main square towards the fifteenth-century **Pfarrkirche St Virgil**, raised on a bluff below the castle. Like the Schwaz's Pfarrkirche, the church was built with two naves, one for miners (on the right) and the other for the burghers. Heading the right-hand nave is the **St Anna altar**, whose statuary, including the touching group of angels at the base, is by Baroque sculptor Meinrad Guggenbichler, the master of Mondsee church (see p.432). At the back of the Pfarrkirche stands a shrine to **St Notburga** (1265–1313), the Rattenberg-born serving girl who became the centre of a local cult after defending the rights of servants against their rich employers. Her emblem is a sickle, a reminder of her pious refusal to work in the fields on Sundays. North of the main square, alleyways lead down to the **Augustinermuseum** in the erstwhile Augustinian monastery (May to mid-Oct daily 10am–5pm; €3), with its rich collection of Gothic wooden sculpture and a fourteenth-century gravestone depicting local worthies Johann Kummersbacher and wife, an extraordinarily delicate piece of carving for the period.

Rattenberg is small enough to be treated as a day-trip destination from elsewhere in the Inn Valley, although the **tourist office**, in the western car park (June–Sept Mon–Fri 10am–1pm; Oct–May Mon–Fri 9.30am–12.30pm & 1.30–5.30pm, Sat 8.30am–12.30pm; ⓣ05337/63321, ⓦwww.tiscover.com/rattenberg-radfeld), will try and fix you up with a **private room** (❷) should you wish to stay. The only **hotel** in town is the *Schlosskeller*, Sparkassenplatz 13 (ⓣ05337/62696; ❸), by the town's eastern main gate, an old-style inn with comfortable rooms – though not all are en suite. The *Schlosskeller* serves up traditional Austrian **food**, while *Café Lavazza*, on the way to the Pfarrkirche on Bienerstrasse, is the place to stop off for a **drink**.

The Alpbach and Wildschönau

Three kilometres west of Rattenberg, at Brixlegg, a minor road heads south up the **Alpbachtal**, one of the Tyrol's most attractive rural stretches. A relatively quiet ski resort favoured by beginners and intermediates, the village of **ALPBACH** lies some 11km along this road, occupying an extremely picturesque position beneath the western flanks of the Wildschönau range. There's a **tourist office** in the village centre (Sept to mid-Dec Mon–Wed & Fri 8.30am–12.30pm & 2–6pm; mid-Dec to early April Mon–Sat 8.30am–12.30pm & 2–6pm; ⓣ05336/6000, ⓦwww.alpbach.at), which has details of **private rooms** in some of the village's large, timber-clad Tyrolean farmhouses, as well as information on local hiking trails. They also arrange free guided hikes and walks for those staying in the village. A two-stage **gondola** on the western side of the Alpbach leads up to the Hornboden, an area of mountain pasture just below the 2127-metre **Wiedersberger Horn**. To reach Alpbach by public transport, catch a train as far as Brixlegg, where ten daily buses depart from the train station, calling at Alpbach village before ending up at Inneralpbach at the head of the valley.

Travelling northeast from Rattenberg, the next place of significance is the dull little industrialized town of **WÖRGL** 20km away, where a minor road climbs south out of town to modern resort villages attractively situated beneath the **Wildschönau** range. The main settlements, served by eight daily buses from Wörgl, are **NIEDERAU** and **OBERAU**. Buses terminate at **AUFFACH**, 20km from Wörgl, where you can either take the Schatzbergbahn **gondola** (July–Aug; one way €5.50, return €8; ⓦwww.schatzbergbahn.at) to the southern shoulder of the 1903-metre Schatzberg, or walk the remaining 3km south to **Schwarzenau**, a hamlet at the head of the valley hemmed in by a semicircle of peaks.

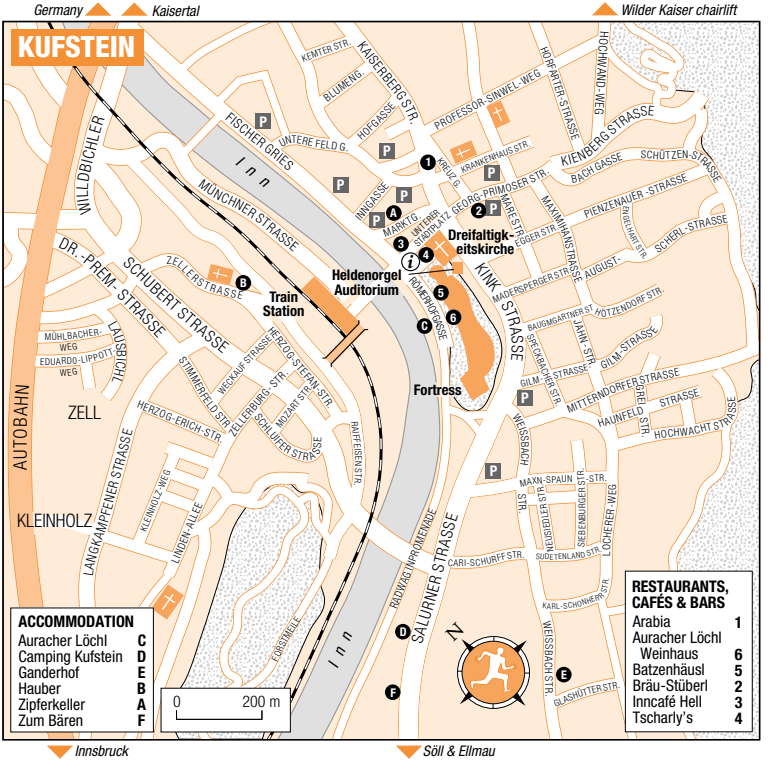
Kufstein and around

KUFSTEIN was a long-standing bone of contention between Bavaria and the Tyrol until Maximilian I finally brought it into the Habsburg fold in 1504. The man whose possession of modern artillery struck fear into the heart of many a Central European monarch placed a cannon nicknamed *Weckauf* ("Wake Up") on the opposite bank of the river and bombarded the defenders into submission. Nowadays the hilltop fortress draws a steady stream of visitors, and it's well known for its programme of operettas on weekend nights in August and its passion plays: one every six years with the next in 2014. Kufstein can also be a great base to explore the outdoors; in winter free ski shuttles run to Söll (late Dec to mid-March; see p.506).

Kufstein's modern suburbs straggle along both sides of the river, but the Altstadt huddles below the fortress on the east bank of the Inn, around **Unterer Stadtplatz**, the picturesque and bustling main square. Raised on a bluff above the square, the facade of the **Dreifaltigkeitskirche** presents a jumble of Gothic and later architectural styles. The interior, in contrast, is pretty plain, except for a florid Rococo altar with Virgin and Child beneath a crimson canopy and floaty cherubs.

The Heldenorgel

An archway above the church leads to the open-air auditorium for concerts featuring the gargantuan **Heldenorgel**, or Heroes' Organ, completed in 1931 to commemorate the dead of World War I. With its 4307 pipes occupying one of the towers of the fortress above, and the keyboard housed at the foot of the fortress hill, next to the auditorium, it's a very difficult instrument to play – there's a 1.5-second delay between striking the keys and hearing the notes.



Atmospheric conditions also wreak havoc with the organ's pitch, and listening to it can be a bizarre experience, with its discordant tones blasting out across the valley. Performances (daily at noon; extra performance at 6pm in summer) cost €0.80 for a seat in the little auditorium – though it can be heard almost everywhere in town – and last about fifteen minutes. They include a couple of pieces of classical organ music (often Bach) followed by a rendition of *Alte Kamaraden*, a mawkish World War I ditty honouring the fallen.

The fortress

Immediately above the auditorium looms the pale sandstone **fortress** (daily: Easter to mid-Nov 9am–5pm; mid-Nov to Easter 10am–4pm; €8.90), approached by a short funicular railway (just beside the Heldenorgel; included in entrance ticket) or on foot via a covered stairway. The latter route climbs through a rock-hewn tunnel to the northwestern watchtower, where Bavarian troops using ladders climbed through a window in 1703, ushering in a year of occupation. An archway just beyond leads to the **Burgerturm**, site of a display of the bright-blue tunics and ostrich-feather hats once worn by the Tyrolean Kaiserjäger, an elite rifle regiment formed by Emperor Francis I in 1815, and the focus of much local patriotism until its disbandment in 1918. One local veteran of the regiment, Max Depolo, was responsible for dreaming up the aforementioned Heldenorgel, the main body of which lurks beneath the tower's domed timber ceiling. From here paths lead out onto the ramparts or up to the fortress's most impressive feature, the cylindrical **Kaiserturm**, which towers above the central courtyard.

Built in the sixteenth century, when much of the (by then 300-year-old) fortress was extensively modified, the tower is easily the most prominent part of the Kufstein skyline, and has become something of a town trademark as a result. Beside the Kaiserturm is the entrance to the **Heimatmuseum**, a modest but attractively presented collection which includes the skeletons of 30,000-year-old cave bears, local furniture, antique weaponry and, perhaps most compelling, an array of eighteenth-century wooden moulds used for casting wax votive objects – in this case miniature arms and legs intended to represent those parts of the body cured after a period of prayer.

An open-air **stage** occupies the extreme southern tip of the fortress (named the Josefsburg, after Josef II, under whose reign it was extensively rebuilt), where concerts are held in summer.

Practicalities

Kufstein's **train station** is on the west bank of the Inn; cross the bridge in front of the station forecourt to reach the Unterer Stadtplatz and the **tourist office** at no. 8 (Mon–Fri 8.30am–12.30pm & 2–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ05372/62207, ⓦwww.kufstein.at), which has a limited list of **private rooms** (2). Other options include the good-value *Hauber* Zellerstr 33 (ⓣ05372/63539; 1), a small pension on the western side of the train station. *Ganderhof*, Weissbachstr 41 (ⓣ05372/62432; 3), is a quiet pension in a residential area south of the centre with en-suite rooms, while *Zipferkeller*, Marktgasse 14a (ⓣ05372/62396, ⓦmembers.nextra.at/zipferkeller; 4), is the most reasonably priced of the town-centre establishments; all rooms have en-suite facilities and TV, and there's a buffet breakfast included. *Hotel zum Bären* Salurnerstr 36 (ⓣ05372/62229, ⓦwww.hotelbaeren.at; 5), is a comfortable suburban hotel 1km south of the centre, with TV and en-suite facilities in all rooms and sauna and free bikes for guests. Beautiful old *Auracher Löchl* Alstadt 3–5 (ⓣ05372/62138, ⓦwww.auracher-loechl.at; 7) sits right in the town centre; some rooms have a river view. The **campground**, *Camping Kufstein*, Salurnerstr 36 (ⓣ05372/62229-55), occupies a grassy stretch of riverbank next to the *Hotel zum Bären*.

Innumerable **restaurants, cafés and bars** dot central Kufstein. Römerhofgasse particularly harbours atmospheric old inns offering Tyrolean specialities and standard Austrian fare. *Auracher Löchl Weinhaus*, Römerhofgasse 5 (ⓣ05372/62138), is a superbly atmospheric, wooden-beamed old place that boasts regular live folk music in the winter, while the nearby *Batzenhäusl*, Römerhofgasse 1, has cosy dining rooms adorned with hunting trophies and assorted curios. *Bräu-Stüberl*, Oberer Stadtplatz 5a, is a dependable town-centre restaurant with moderately priced traditional dishes, and plenty of outdoor seating round the corner on Arkadenplatz. For **nightlife**, the best bet is to bar-hop until you find music and clientele you like: *Arabia* and *Tscharly's* are good places to start. *Kulturfabrik*, 2km north of town at Feldgasse 12 (ⓦwww.kulturfabrik.at), hosts jazz, rock, and alternative gigs (the tourist office will have event information).

Thiersee, Hechtsee and the Wilder Kaiser

In summer Kufsteiners head out to the string of **small lakes** hidden behind the low hills northwest of the River Inn. Biggest of the lakes, and bordered by a flourishing resort that carries its name, is **Thiersee**, 10km west of Kufstein by road and served by about nine daily buses (not Sun). There are plenty of small bathing areas, a tourist office in the village centre doling out private rooms, and a campsite on the lake's western shore. The small, forest-enclosed and altogether more modest **Hechtsee** 5km northwest of Kufstein, has a

Skiing and hiking in the Wilder Kaiser region

The gentle pistes south of Söll, Scheffau and Ellmau are linked by an extensive lift system to produce **SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser-Brixental** (ⓦwww.wilderkaiser.info) – a sizeable ski area with 90 lifts and 250km of pistes – that extends into the next valley where Hopfgarten and Brixen lie. The region is largely suited to beginners and intermediates, though there are a couple of black runs and some off-piste skiing on the heights above Söll. **Lift passes** covering the whole lot cost €35.50 for 1 day; €173 for 6 days; other permutations up to 14 days are also available.

The area is comparatively quiet in **summer**, although the main ski lifts open up between June and September to serve the needs of walkers. The **BergWelt Lift und Wanderpass** (€41 for 7 days) covers all the lifts. If staying in the area, your hotel guest card will also get you free use of the Kaiserjet bus, which ferries passengers between the main chair lifts and sights in the region about four times a day.

Strandbad, rowing-boat rental and a popular café-restaurant. Pathways lead round the shore, through the surrounding woods and on into Germany – the border is only steps from the northwestern end of the lake. Public transport doesn't run out here, but it's an easy walk or cycle from Kufstein, and a taxi will only set you back around €4.

At the eastern edge of Kufstein, parklands merge into the wooded slopes of the **Wilder Kaiser**, a paradise for hikers and mountain-bikers. The most direct route uphill is the Wilder Kaiser chairlift (June–Sept & late Dec to early April; €10.15 return) 2km northeast of the centre, which ascends to the *Weinbergerhaus* hut and provides access to a plateau of pastureland beneath the rugged, inhospitable peak. To the east of the centre, the *Aschenbrenner Hütte* (ⓣ05372/62220, ⓦwww.berghaus-aschenbrenner.com) marks the starting point for innumerable forest-shrouded hiking trails.

Walks up the **Kaisertal**, the beautiful alpine valley suspended between the Wilder Kaiser and Zahmer Kaiser peaks, begin at a car park 4km north of the centre at the end of Sparchnerstrasse (local Kufstein–Ebbs buses pass by). It's dubbed the "German autobahn" by locals because of its popularity with Bavarian day-trippers.

Cycle paths running alongside both banks of the River Inn, and numerous cycling routes towards the neighbouring hills and lakes, combine to make Kufstein and surrounds a **bike-friendly** area, too. Cycling maps can be bought from the tourist office, and bikes hired from *Hotel zum Bären* (see p.505).

Söll

Buzzing in winter, resuming a state of rural repose in summer, **SÖLL** is a largely modern village dominated by chalet-style apartment buildings. In its **Pfarrkirche**, however, Söll possesses the most impressive Baroque monument in the western Tyrol, its riotously stuccoed and gilded interior decked out in vivid ceiling frescoes painted by Christoph Anton Mayr of Schwaz in 1768. Everything focuses on the grandiose red marble pulpit topped by a gilded swan, symbol of Christ. At the southern margins of the village there's a two-stage gondola (June to late Oct & mid-Dec to May; €9 return to Hochsöll, €13 return to Höhe Salve, the top of which, the 1827-metre **Höhe Salve**, being where most of the skiing activity takes place). On the way up you can stop off at Hochsöll, where you'll find **Hexenwasser** ("Witch Water"), a kind of walking theme park based on the idea that the mountain used to be home to the local witches. It's free, and consists of a number of well-signposted walks dotted with restaurants and

activities for the kids along the way. Collect a map at the tourist office or in the witch's cauldron at the cable-car station.

The **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1.30–6pm, Sat 1.30–6pm; ⓣ05358/505210, ⓦwww.soell.at) in Söll's centre will help book you into **private rooms** (❷) and direct you to modern chalet **hotels** like the central *Feldwebel*, Dorf 73 (ⓣ05333/5224, ⓦwww.feldwebel.at; summer ❺; winter ❼), which has more of a traditional *Gasthof* feel than most others, and the equally central but swankier *Postwirt*, Dorf 82 (ⓣ05333/5081, ⓦwww.hotel-postwirt-soell.at; summer ❼; winter ❾). Alternatively, try *Camping Franzlhof*, on the north side of the village at Dorfbichl 36 (ⓣ05333/5117). The *Postwirt* has a good restaurant serving Tyrolean and Austrian **food** in cosy traditional rooms, whilst the *Söller Stuben* opposite the tourist office has cheap and tasty lunchtime deals. One long-standing **drinking** hole that seems to survive is the central *Whiskeymühle*, a roomy disco-bar entered through a lobby the shape of a barrel, although it's being given a run for its money by the newer *Salven Stadl* at the foot of the road to the cable car.

Scheffau, Ellmau and St Johann In Tirol

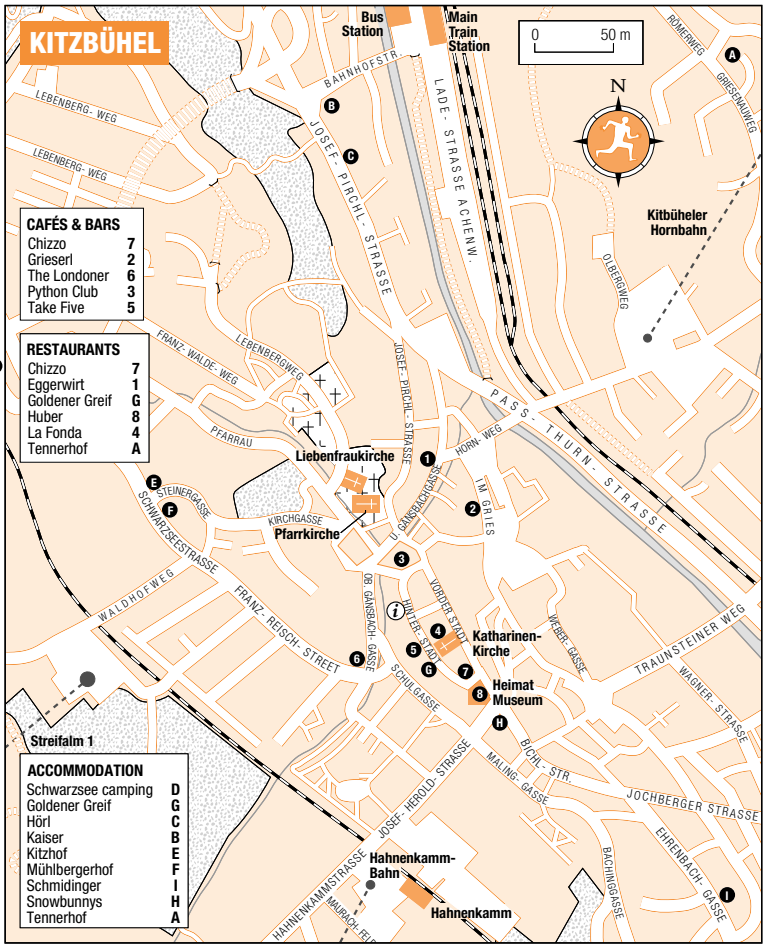
Apart from the cable car up the 1650-metre **Brandstadl**, there's little to detain you in **SCHEFFAU**, 5km to the east of Söll. However, a road heading north out of the village offers an inviting side-trip to **Hintersteinersee** 4km away, a small lake picturesquely in the shadow of the Wilder Kaiser. A Strandbad occupies the southern end of the lake and nice walks follow the eastern shore.

Five kilometres east of Scheffau, **ELLMAU** is ideally situated for short excursions into the mountains, with the awesome Wilder Kaiser to the north, and the no less imposing 1555-metre **Hartkaser** to the south, the latter reached by a funicular at the western end of the village. The tourist office (Mon–Sat 8am–8pm, Sun noon–6pm; ⓣ05358/505, ⓦwww.ellmau.at) is in the town centre opposite the main bus stop. Beyond Ellmau, it's another 10km to **ST JOHANN IN TIROL**, a frumpy if inoffensive winter package resort that offers little incentive to linger. Luckily, more enticing destinations are near: Zell am See (see p.412) is 40 minutes by train to the east; and Kitzbühel only 20 minutes to the west.

Kitzbühel

Centre of a winter sports area that spreads over the easternmost corner of Tyrol, **KITZBÜHEL** began as a medieval copper- and silver-mining town, giving it a historic core that still sometimes looks like something out of a Gothic fairy tale. Squat, brightly painted town houses are set against a backdrop of pasture-laden hills that with the first snowfall promise a varied skiing terrain ideal for novices and intermediates. The main feature of the local mountainscape is the imperious ridge of the Wilder Kaiser to the northwest which, despite being almost 20km away, is much more dramatic when seen from Kitzbühel than it is close up – a horizon-hogging ripple of tortured, jagged rock.

The town's development as a ski resort owes a great deal to the efforts of Franz Reisch, who imported skis from Norway in the 1890s, and made the first ski runs. The town became a magnet for film stars and central European society figures during the inter-war years (and a recreation centre for Luftwaffe flying aces in the 1940s) and, despite the onset of package tourism, it still retains its rich clientele and genteel air.



Kitzbühel can't really match St Anton when it comes to challenging the experienced skier but it does possess one classic downhill route, the **Hahnenkamm** (it finishes up just west of the town centre, next to the golf course), which has been the scene of an annual downhill race ever since 1931. The race still features prominently in the World Cup skiing calendar – usually the last weekend in January for the men, the second to last weekend for the women. Both occasions are major society events, drawing huge hordes to the town's dainty pedestrianized centre.

Arrival, information and accommodation

From the **train station**, head down Bahnhofstrasse and turn left to reach the town centre, which is raised on a small hill about ten minutes' walk away. The **tourist office** at Hinterstadt 18 (Mon–Fri 8.30am–6pm, Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 10am–noon & 4–6pm; ⓣ05356/777, ⓦwww.kitzbuehel.com) has an array of

English-language brochures, and can book private rooms (summer ❷; winter ❸) on your behalf. Tourist office staff tend to look down on budget travellers, however, and the level of help you receive may depend on personal whim; private rooms in the nearby villages of Aurach and Reith tend to be cheaper, but are only practical if you have your own transport. There's a **campsite** at Schwarzsee, the small lake 2km north of town on the Kirchberg road (☎05356/62806, ⓦwww.bruggerhof-camping.at; open all year). Regional trains (not IC or EC ones) stop at Schwarzsee halt: turn left out of the station and the campsite is a five-minute walk away.

Hotels

Goldener Greif Hinterstadt 24 ☎05356/64311, ⓦwww.hotel-goldener-greif.at. Classic town-centre Gasthof in one of Kitzbühel's oldest houses, which counts film stars and European aristocrats among its guests. Modern furnishings, en-suite facilities and TV. ❽

Kitzhof Schwarzseestr 8 ☎05356/63211, ⓦwww.hotel-kitzhof.com. Modern hotel with large, comfortable balconied rooms and and good spa facilities including outdoor pool. Close to the nursery slopes. ❾

Tennerhof Griesenauweg 26 ☎05356/63181, ⓦwww.tennerhof.com. Attractive timber-clad building with flower-bedecked balconies, northeast of the centre on the hillside below the Kitzbüheler Horn. Comfortable rooms have TV and en-suite bathrooms, and there's a wide range of amenities including a sauna and indoor and outdoor pools. ❾

Pensions and hostels

Hörl Josef-Pirchler-Str 60 ☎05356/63144. Conveniently placed between the train station and the centre, and with a second house at Bahnhofstr 8, this is probably the cheapest place within striking distance of the action, offering cosy doubles, some with en-suite facilities, plus some singles. ❹

Kaiser Bahnhofstr 2 ☎0662/826617, ⓔmikedodemont@hotmail.com. English-speaking, backpacker-friendly hotel right in front of the train station, with hostel-style four-bed dorms as well as comfy en-suite doubles. Open all winter, but tends to take only groups in the summer. ❷

Mühlbergerhof Schwarzseestr 6 ☎05356/62835, ⓦwww.hechenberger-kitzbuehel.at. Pension in a nice suburban house a short walk northwest of the centre. All rooms have en-suite facilities. Summer ❹; winter ❺

Schmidinger Ehrenbachgasse 13 ☎05356/63134, ⓦwww.schmidinger.cc. Large pension five minutes from the centre, with bright en suites. ❹

Snowbunnys Bichlstr 30 ☎05356/64708, ⓦwww.snowbunnys.co.uk. Popular and well-run hostel with 4- and 6- bed dorms as well as doubles. Kitchen facilities, free breakfast and Wi-Fi included; Internet available. ❺

The Town

Downtown Kitzbühel revolves around two elongated squares, **Vorderstadt** and **Hinterstadt**, each boasting a colourful ensemble of medieval merchants' houses. A twelfth-century pile at the southern end of Hinterstadt holds an engaging **Heimatmuseum** (mid-March to early June Tues–Sat 10am–1pm; early June to late Sept daily 10am–6pm; late Sept to early Dec Tues–Sun 10am–1pm; early Dec to mid-March Tues–Sun 10am–1pm & 3–6pm; €5), which offers a jumble of folk crafts, skiing mementoes and mining artefacts – the latter revealing something of the industrial grit behind the tinseltown of present-day Kitzbühel. Between Hinterstadt and Vorderstadt stands the unassuming **Katharinenkirche**, now used as a memorial chapel honouring the dead of two world wars. Within, the small but exquisite Kupferschmidaltar was carved in 1513 by the Master of Rabenden, surrounding a relief of the Madonna and Child.

Perched on a small plateau at the northern end of Vorderstadt are two more worthwhile churches. The more obvious of the pair, the fifteenth-century **Pfarrkirche**, contains a harmonious ensemble of Baroque altars and statuary, and the Kupferschmids' family grave, a sixteenth-century slab of red marble

The Blitz from Kitz – and other skiing legends

Considered by many as the birthplace of Austrian skiing, Kitzbühel is also home to the country's first genuine skiing superstar, **Toni "The Blitz from Kitz" Sailer** – the most talented skier of his generation, and arguably Austria's greatest ever winter sportsman. Born in Kitzbühel in 1935, by the age of 17 he was already the Tyrolean downhill, slalom and giant slalom champion, and four years later snatched three gold medals in these disciplines at the 1956 Winter Olympics – an achievement unmatched before or since. Sailer's triumph had a profound effect on an Austrian public that had had little to celebrate in the postwar years, and with his pop-star good looks and charm, he became one of Austrian sport's first mass-media celebrities. A career in singing and acting soon beckoned. With seven world championship titles to his credit Sailer retired aged 22, having been warned by the International Olympic Committee that his new status as all-round ski celebrity was contrary to the spirit of amateurism that still ruled the sport. Sailer went on to star in several melodramatic piste-based adventure films, a typically Austrian genre in which he needed to do little more than play himself.

Sailer's successor was **Karl "King of the Arlberg" Schranz**, a St Anton native who consistently rated among the world's best downhill racers, twice becoming overall world champion. Notorious for his dedication to training and technique (he pioneered the figure-hugging aerodynamic suit), he was also prone to self-doubt and, following a skiing injury in America in 1960, sold his skis, gambled away the money in Reno, and had to take a job as a Hollywood stuntman – only returning to skiing when he was voted Austria's Sportsman of the Year. Schranz ultimately owes his place in the Austrian pantheon to two races he notoriously failed to win. Competing at the 1968 Olympics in Grenoble, Schranz claimed that he'd been distracted by a policeman standing too near the course, and – in unprecedented fashion – was allowed a second run and went on to record the fastest time. Race officials, however, decided to disqualify Schranz after TV replays suggested that the offending policeman had been a figment of the Austrian's imagination. Schranz suffered an even more humiliating rebuff at the Sapporo Olympics four years later when, three days before the games, he was disqualified by the International Olympic Committee for wearing a T-shirt advertising a brand of coffee. The Austrian public was outraged: the president of the Austrian Olympic Committee had his house set alight, and several IOC functionaries received death threats. In a remarkable display of popular support, an estimated 10,000 people lined the streets of Vienna to greet Schranz on his return.

engraved with scenes from the Passion. Immediately above, the **Liebfrauenkirche** harbours Rococo stucco-work and, in the high altar, a copy of the Cranach *Madonna and Child* from Innsbruck's Domkirche (see p.472).

The mountains

Towering above Kitzbühel to the west, the 1655-metre Hahnenkamm can be scaled with the help of the **Hahnenkammbahn** gondola (June to mid-Oct & mid-Dec to April; €15.50 return), on the western side of town about 500m uphill from the tourist office. Before embarking on one of the many walking trails at the summit, savour the view of the Kitzbüheler Horn on the opposite side of the valley and the jagged ridge of the Wilder Kaiser to the north. The restaurant next to the cable-car station at the top contains a small **museum** (open in season when the gondola is running: daily 12.30–4pm; free), which tells the story of alpine sport in the region through an entertaining display of old photographs. The northern shoulder of the Hahnenkamm can also be approached via the

Austria's bruised sporting pride was restored by the rags-to-riches story of **Franz "The Kaiser" Klammer**, born in 1953 in Mooswald, a Carinthian village 30km from the nearest ski lift. Klammer suddenly burst onto the scene in 1974, coming second in the downhill at the World Championships, and winning eight downhill victories in the 1974-75 World Cup series. His greatest moment came in 1976, when he bore the Austrian flag at the opening ceremony of the Innsbruck Olympics then won the downhill, sending the nation into paroxysms of jubilation. After finishing up as World Cup downhill champion three times in the late seventies, Klammer's form dipped alarmingly. He failed to qualify for the Olympics in 1980, and his struggle to return to the big time became a national obsession. The Kaiser's come-back victory finally came at a World Cup race at Val d'Isère in 1981, and though he only managed tenth place in the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics, his place in skiing legend was now assured.

Despite Klammer's retirement in 1984, Austrian skiers continued to figure heavily in the world rankings, although it wasn't until the emergence of **Hermann "The Herminator" Maier** in 1997 that the nation could once again boast a bona-fide beast of the piste. Hailing from the ski resort of Flachau in the Salzburger Land, Mayer was World Cup champion in 1997-98, Austria's first overall champion since Schranz. Mayer went to the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano as the hot favourite for the downhill, only to fall spectacularly near the start of the course. He made up for it by winning gold in both slalom and super-giant slalom, and has dominated alpine skiing ever since. In 1999–2000 he headed the World Cup downhill, super-g and giant slalom standings, and became overall champion by a vast points margin – overtaking Franz Klammer's Austrian record of 27 World Cup victories in the process. By 2007, and despite a motorcycle accident in which he almost lost a leg, he had notched 53 World Cup wins. Other big Austrian names of recent years have been **Stephan Eberharter**, Maier's long time closest rival, while a current leading light is **Benjamin Raich** who has 29 World Cup Victories under his belt. Among the women, **Annemarie Moser-Pröll** clocked up more World Cup victories than any other woman ever has (62) in the 1970s and 80s, whilst still-active **Renate Götschl** lies at number three in the all-time world rankings. New talent made itself known in 2007 in the form of **Nicole Hosp**, overall winner of the Women's World Cup, yet again confirming the nation's dominance of alpine skiing.

Fleckalmbahn gondola (late June to late Sept & mid-Dec to April; €15.50 return), which commences just outside the hamlet of **Klausen**, 4km out of Kitzbühel on the Kirchberg road.

On the eastern side of town, the **Kitzbüheler Hornbahn** gondola (mid-May to late Oct & mid-Dec to April; €15.50 return) ascends to the *Adlerhütte*, where you have the choice of walking either to the 1670-metre *Alpenhaus* (also reachable by car via toll road; €3 per vehicle plus €1.50 per passenger) on the southeast shoulder of the Kitzbüheler Horn, or to the 2000-metre summit of the Horn itself. Either way, expect to enjoy good views of the Wilder Kaiser massif to the north, a chaos of craggy grey peaks rising suddenly out of the bottle-green lowland forests.

Eating and drinking

Most of Kitzbühel's **eating** and **drinking** venues are in the Altstadt, although it's worth descending to the lower lying, eastern part of the town centre to seek out a couple of the more interesting bars. You don't have to limit yourselves to

Kitzbühel passes and activities

A **Sommerferienpass** or Summer Holiday Pass covering all lifts in the Kitzbühel area, local buses and the Aquarena swimming pool costs €37.60 for 3 days within a 7-day period; and €51.50 for 6 days within a 10-day period (also valid for local buses all of the 7 or 10 days).

Cycling There's plenty of good cycling around Kitzbühel, for every skill and fitness level. The tourist office provides free biking maps and has details of the four cable cars that will take your bike for free (day pass €26). Mountain bikes can be rented at Mountain Edge, Josef Pirchl Str 14 (May–Oct; ⓣ0650/7203500, ⓦwww.mountainedge.co.uk) or at the *Hotel Tyrol*, Jochbergerstr 7. Rates run between €16 for town bikes to €29 per day for full-suspension models. Guiding is extra and starts at only €6 per day; tours are offered every day of the week, most priced around the €25 mark for four hours including bike hire.

Golf Kitzbühel is one of Austria's big golfing centres; Golfclub Kitzbühel Schwarzee (ⓣ05356/71645, ⓦwww.kitzbuehel-golf.com) has an eighteen-hole course. Between May and October there are a couple of nine-hole courses in the area, together with numerous driving ranges – contact the tourist office for details.

Hiking The tourist office provides regional hiking maps, and organizes free guided hikes in summer, and walks on snow-cleared pathways in winter.

Paragliding Element, Wieseneggweg 7 (ⓣ0664/1000580, ⓦwww.kitz-adventure.at), organizes tandem flights starting at €99, as well as joint hiking and paragliding expeditions.

Skiing Kitzbühl's ski slopes are largely beginner and intermediate playgrounds, though isolated pockets of black runs do exist, particularly on the ski area's fringes; there's also a freeride park including 100-metre half-pipe, table jump and quarter pie. One-day (€38.50), six-day (€180) and fourteen-day ski passes (€322) and various other half-day and multi-day passes are available from lift stations. Each covers cable cars, lifts and buses for the whole of the Kitzbühel ski region. Equipment can be hired at lift stations or at numerous sports shops in the town centre. A sizeable cross-country skiing network links communities along the valley floor.

Swimming Aquarena, Klostergasse 7 (daily 9am–8.30pm; €9.30) has an indoor polo, sauna; outdoor swimming at the municipal Strandbad at Schwarzsee (€3.50).

restaurants if you want to eat – a large proportion of bars serve full meals, and all offer snacks of some kind.

Restaurants

Chizzo Josef-Herold-Str 2. A trusty source of inexpensive Tyrolean dishes (menus change daily but almost always include a good *Gröstl*) and mid-priced Austrian standards, in attractive wood-panelled rooms or on a pleasant outdoor terrace. Also has an upmarket bar with a dressy crowd.

Eggerwirt Untere Gänsbachstr 12. A wide range of good-quality, reasonably priced Tyrolean and Austrian food in a nice old inn. Also does good trout and a selection of game dishes. Closed Nov to mid–Dec.

Goldener Greif Hinterstadt 24 ⓣ05356/6431. Top-quality Austrian and international food in refined surroundings, for those prepared to splash out a little.

Huber Vorderstadt 18. Deli and *Imbiss* that's a good for no-nonsense Austrian fare, from Wurst-and-fries-type snacks to more substantial dishes, all at reasonable, un-Kitzbühel-like prices.

La Fonda Hinterstadt 13. Fairly predictable Tex-Mex and Italian food, although the lively atmosphere and piped Latin music make this a popular hangout. Also a good place to drink in the evening.

Tennerhof Griesenauweg 26 ⓣ05356/63181. Posh hotel restaurant with swanky surroundings and highly regarded international gourmet cuisine. Closed Oct to mid-Dec.

Bars and cafés

Grieserl Im Gries 6. A cosy place with a traditional Austrian feel in the small bar area, and a more

elegant candlelit ambience in the covered terrace outside. Toasted sandwiches, salads and a set-menu main meal are available.

The Londoner Franz-Reisch-Str 4. Large, lively and enjoyable English-speaking pub that is something of a Kitzbühel institution, attracting occasional live music, and a crowd of foreign tourists and animated young locals. Come the weekend of the Hahnenkamm race, international skiers will either be propping up the bar or serving behind it.

Python Club Hinterstadt 6. Standard selection of commercial techno played to a mixture of serious drink-fuelled groovers and tourists. Open Thurs–Sat when it rarely gets going until after midnight, but often doesn't close until dawn.

Take Five Hinterstadt 22. Popular town-centre disco, playing a good mix of tunes to a slightly more older, more sober and dressier crowd than elsewhere; €15 entry charge and stiff drink prices give it an overpriced and rather snooty feel.

The Oberland

West of Innsbruck, in Tyrol's **Oberland**, urban tourism takes a back seat to outdoor activities. Small Inn Valley towns, like **Imst** and **Landeck**, barely deserve fleeting visits while the deep alpine valleys – increasingly rugged further west – merit all the attention. Closest to Innsbruck and to its northwest is the **Zugspitze region**, where a number of resort villages including **Ehrwald** gather in a lush and enticing valley around the base of the mighty Zugspitze peak. Otherwise almost all the main mountain valleys extend south from the Inn Valley. The **Ötztal**, **Oberinntal** and the **Paznauntal** are the best, all with excellent hiking and biking in summer and plentiful skiing in winter. West of the Inn Valley, the **Arlberg** mountain range rises up to mark Tyrol's western fringes and its border with the Vorarlberg. This region is home to **St Anton**, one of Austria's oldest alpine resorts, and one of its best for expert skiers, who can enjoy access to a ski area that extends all the way to the Vorarlberg resorts of **Zurs** and **Lech**, both renowned playgrounds of the rich and famous.

Despite obstacles posed by the alpine terrain, **public transport** in the area is pretty comprehensive. The A12 autobahn and main rail line run east–west along the Inn Valley, with bus routes branching off to the north and south to serve the communities in the side-valleys. Train stations such as Ötztal, Imst-Pitztal and Landeck are important hubs, with many bus services either commencing their journeys there or passing through.

The Zugspitze region

Hidden from the Inn Valley by the formidable barrier of the Lechtaler Alpen and hard by the German border and town of Garmish Partenkirchen, the **Zugspitze region** presents an alpine environment subtly different to the rest of the Oberland. Its pasture land is presided over by the jagged grey mass of the Zugspitze around **Ehrwald** presenting one of the Tyrol's most dramatic landscapes.

The region is accessible from the Inn Valley by train from Innsbruck, or by roads that climb over the mountains from Stams (see p.486) and Imst (see p.518) via Nassereith, from where public buses head over the scenic **Fern Pass;**

▲ Zugspitze

services are skeletal at weekends. Around 2km short of the top of the **Fern Pass** is the 1216-metre-high beauty spot **Schloss Fernsteinsee**, where an attractive little lake is fringed by woods and mountains; there's a a *Gasthof* with a good (if often busy) restaurant, and a **campsite** (May–Sept). Beyond the summit of the pass, it's only a short distance to *Gasthof Zugspitzeblick*, site of another roadside restaurant and a marvellous view of the 2962-metre **Zugspitze**, which rears up dramatically from the valley floor like a cluster of unearthly molars. After a steep descent, a minor road heads off for the resort villages of Biberwier and **Ehrwald**, the main centre to aim for since the neighbouring villages of **Lermoos** and **Biberwier** are little more than its package-resort satellites. The main road continues along the lush, open **Lech Valley** around the market town of **Reutte**, which makes for a pleasant stop-off en route to the German border just to the north.

Ehrwald

Couched in the shadow of the Zugspitze and ringed by a series of similarly rugged mountains, **EHRWALD** is a resort village favoured by German and Dutch tourists, which nevertheless retains a rustic, unhurried atmosphere and is an excellent base for a range of outdoor activities. One of the best times to be in Ehrwald is **Midsummer's Night** (known here as *Bergfeuer*, or "mountain fire"), when bonfires are lit on the mountains ringing the valley.

The mountains

Highlight of any trip to Ehrwald is the cable-car ascent of the **Zugspitze**, the inhospitable 2962-metre peak marking the Austro-German border. Buses (5–6 daily) run from Ehrwald's central Kirchplatz to the terminus of the **Tiroler Zugspitzbahn** cable car at **Obermoos**, 5km northeast of town (May–Oct & Dec to early April 8.40am–4.40pm; €33 return; ⓦ www.zugspitze.at). Once on top you're treated to spectacular alpine views, with jagged lines of peaks arrayed to the south, and Bavarian lowlands to the north, along with a rather surreal

collection of cafés and gift shops. In summer, Bergsport Total (see "Activities" box below) organizes a guided walk up the Zugspitze (a 6hr ascent which shouldn't be tackled by the inexperienced), as well as a medium-difficulty descent of the mountain (6hr) using the route known locally as the **Gatterl**. The higher sections of the latter walk are icy throughout the year, but it's worth considering if you're reasonably fit.

Less spectacular than the Zugspitze, but providing access to a wider range of easy hikes, is the **gondola** to the **Ehrwalder Alm** (May–Oct & Dec–early April; €12 return), which starts about 1km east of Ehrwald's Kirchplatz. Numerous trails cross the alpine meadows at the top, most popular of which is the **one-hour walk** along a gravel track to the **Seebenalm** to the southwest. Just above the Seebenalm hut is the small mountain lake, **Seebensee**, the south end of which provides a classic view back towards the Zugspitze – the kind of vista favoured by alpine calendars.

Ehrwald passes and activities

In summer, a decent option is the **Z-Ticket**. It costs €61 for seven days, and gives free use of the cable cars (although only once on the Zugspitze), buses, the local pool and tennis courts, and a free boat ride on nearby Heirtwangersee. Passes are available to buy at any of the cable car ticket desks.

Biking The tourist office organizes various mountain bike tours from €30 per person and sells a usable map of local routes for €1. Intersport, Kirchplatz 13 (☎05673/2371), and Zweirad Zirknitzer, Zugspitzstr 16 (☎05673/3219), both offer a range of mountain bikes for around €20 per day.

Hiking A selection of hiking trips with local guides (including easier walks for families with children) are organized by Bergsport Total, Kirchplatz 14a (☎05673/3000, ⓦwww.bergsport-total.at), €13 per participant for easy hikes, €19 for more demanding ones, or free if you stay in one of their thirteen partner hotels (the latter are well worth considering if you want to attempt mountain paths that you wouldn't try on your own). They are also able to provide guides for mountaineering expeditions, and can help to organize llama trekking (a day-trip in the mountains with the incongruous beasts serving as baggage-carriers). In winter, ask the tourist office for a map of snow-cleared paths.

Rafting and canyoning Bergsport Total (see under "Hiking") or Ehrwald tourist office have details of rafting excursions (from €45 per trip) to either the Lech Valley to the west, or the Inn Valley to the south.

Rock climbing The Zugspitze region holds rock-climbing routes for all grades of ability – Bergsport Total has details (see under "Hiking").

Skiing The main skiing regions are the Ehrwalder Alm immediately east of Ehrwald; the Marienberg just above Biberwier; the Grubigstein above Lermoos; and the Zugspitzplatt below the summit of the Zugspitze – which, despite being on the German side of the border, is accessible from the Austrian side via the Tiroler Zugspitzbahn cable car and is included in some of the local ski passes. Best of these is the Happy Ski Pass which covers the Ehrwald region as well as Seefeld and the German town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The Pass costs €91 for 3 days, €169.50 for 6 days, and €285.50 for 13 days – other durations are available. A one-day pass for the Zugspitze on its own weighs in at €35. There are good nursery slopes just outside Lermoos, a range of intermediate runs on the Zugspitzplatt, and plenty of cross-country skiing tracks on the valley floor.

Swimming The indoor pool at Familienbad Ehrwald, Hauptstr 71 (daily 10am–8.30pm; ☎05673/2718), features a children's area, water chutes, sauna and gym.

Practicalities

Ehrwald's **train station** is at the northern end of the village about 1km from the centre, while **buses**, more conveniently, drop passengers on the central Kirchplatz, a few steps away from the **tourist office** at Kirchplatz 1 (Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; ⓣ05673/20000, ⓦwww.zugspitzarena.com). Ask at the tourist office about booking one of the plentiful and reasonable **private rooms**. Of the numerous **hotels**, *Grüner Baum*, Kirchplatz (mid-Dec to late Oct; ⓣ05673/2302, ⓦwww.gruenerbaum.com; summer ❻; winter ❼), is comfortable with modern, smallish and balconied en-suite rooms; the more modest *Alpin*, Hauptstr 29 (ⓣ05673/2279, ⓦwww.hotel-alpin.at; summer ❹; winter ❺), offers simpler en-suite rooms. Both hotels have their own sauna.

You shouldn't need to stray too far from Kirchplatz to find decent **food**. For an inexpensive meal, *Pizzeria Al Castagno*, Kirchplatz 22, is the best of the Italians. The restaurant of the *Grüner Baum* has a good range of standard Austrian cuisine, and the *Tiroler Stub'n* in the *Hotel Sonnenspitze* on Kirchplatz has a marginally better choice of traditional Tyrolean dishes. The *Holzerstub'n*, just off Kirchplatz on Schulweg (ⓣ05673/3323), is the best restaurant in town with an Austrian/international mix – reservations are advised. *Café-Bistro Rainer's* on Kirchplatz is a swanky bar-bistro offering toasted sandwiches, salads, and more pricey steaks – it's also a good place for a **drink**.

Reutte

Twenty-five kilometres northwest of Ehrwald, **REUTTE** is a pleasant enough market town, which grew rich on the profits of the salt trade between Hall in the Inn Valley and Bavaria to the north. There's not much to the town apart from one long street, which goes by the name of Untermarkt at the northern end and Obermarkt to the south. It's on Untermarkt that you'll find the most arresting edifice in town, the **Zeillerhaus**, once home to a prolific family of painters who painted its swirling Baroque designs. There are further reminders of the Zeiller family in the **Heimatmuseum** in the nearby Grünes Haus (May–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 2–5pm; €3), for the most part a well-presented museum, even if its odd bits of weaponry and traditional wooden furniture fail to overwhelm. Highlight of the collection, the *Betrachtungsärgeln*, or "meditation coffins" – 40cm high with model skeletons inside – were popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a means of pondering the transience of earthly life.

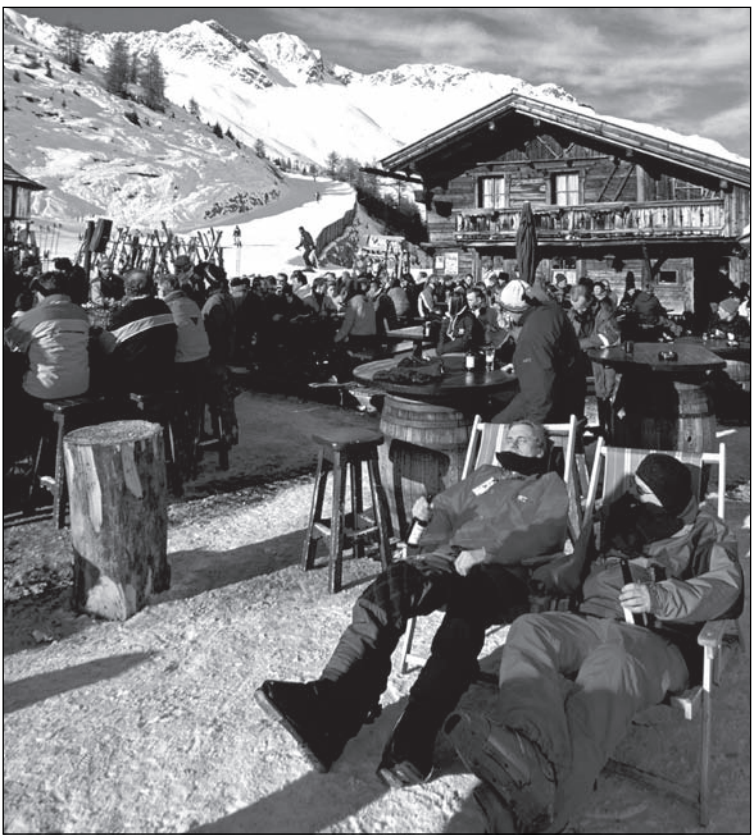
Practicalities

Reutte's **train station** is at the northern end of town, five minutes' walk from the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat 8.30am–noon; ⓣ05672/62336, ⓦwww.reutte.com), on the corner of Bahnhofstrasse and Untermarkt. The Altstadt is just beyond, and a choice of decent **hotels** line Reutte's main street: the *Schwarzer Adler*, Obermarkt 75 (ⓣ05672/62504; ❸), has large, simple rooms, all en suite and with balconies. The more upmarket *Hotel-Garni Beck*, Untermarkt 11 (ⓣ05672/62522, ⓦwww.welcome.to/hotel-das-beck; ❹), has bright rooms with en-suite facilities, while the four-star *Gasthof zum Mohren*, Untermarkt 26 (ⓣ05672/62345, ⓦwww.hotel-mohren.at; ❻), offers plush, comfortable quarters, plus some superb four-bed family rooms. For **eating**, the restaurant of *Gasthof zum Mohren* (see above) has the best range of Tyrolean food in town, as well as more expensive schnitzels and steaks. A good daytime **drinking** venue is the café of *Hotel-Garni Beck*, which serves excellent pastries in a plant-filled room on the first floor.

The Ötztal and around

Probably the most dramatic valley feeding the Inn from the high southern Alps, the deep, fertile **ÖTZTAL** stretches south for over 50km to the rugged Ötztaler Alps, which mark Austria's border with Italy. If you don't have the time to explore Ötztal in depth, at least try to take a bus up the valley to Obergurgl and back – a wonderfully scenic ride whatever the season. But longer stays are recommended at any time of year and Ötztal's villages, though drawing plenty of tourists, avoid being inflated parodies of alpine tourism.

Gateway to the valley is the market town of **Imst**, though all trains on the main Inn Valley rail line stop short at **Bahnhof Ötztal**, a train station and small town from which about twelve buses a day head up the valley. Close by, the town of **Haiming** is western Tyrol's most important whitewater **rafting centre**. Tourist offices throughout the region run trips here, with transfers often included in the price of packages. The **tourist office** (daily 8am–6pm) on the main road in Ambach – a small village at the entrance to the valley – has information on this and all else in the Ötztal and is a recommended stop if you're entering the valley by car.



▲ Ötztaler Alps

Ötztal passes and activities

A range of lift passes is available to hikers and skiers throughout the year. In **summer** you'll pay €56 for 7 days for the **Ötztal Card**, which will get you free use of local transport, swimming pools and museums, and reductions on a number of activities such as rafting and mountain bike hire, along with use of all the region's lifts.

Cycling A popular cycle path leads from Bahnhof Ötztal right up the valley to Obergurgl, joining the main road for short stretches but staying separate most of the way. It's reasonably easy as far as Sölden, after which the path gets considerably steeper – fit mountain bikers will enjoy the challenge. Bikes can be hired in Sölden at Intersport at the Gaislachkogl gondola and at Feelfree Touristik (see "rafting")

Hiking Skischule Obergurgl (see "Mountaineering") offer a weekly programme of guided walks over the summer.

Mountaineering An impressive range of high alpine peaks can be tackled as one- or two-day tours in the company of local guides, who can be contacted through Bergführerstelle Vent (☎05254/8106, www.bergfuehrer-vent.at), Bergsport und Erlebnisschule Sölden (☎05254/2948, ⓦwww.bergfuehrer-soelden.com) and Skischule Obergurgl (☎05256/6305, ⓦwww.skischule-obergurgl.com).

Paragliding Vacancia Outdoor, Hauptstr 270, Sölden (☎05254/3100; ⓦwww.vacancia.at). Tandem flights from around €110.

Rafting and canyoning One major local outfit is Feelfree Touristik in Haiming, (☎05252/60350, ⓦwww.feelfree.at). The various trips offered start around €45 for a couple of hours on the Inn, and go up to around €100 for much wilder trips in the Ötztal The company also runs summer canyoning and mountain biking trips and many winter activities too. Rafting trips from €45, canyoning trips from €65.

Rock climbing Bergsport und Erlebnisschule Sölden, Sölden (see "mountaineering"), as well as Vacancia (see "paragliding"), offer climbing courses for all abilities, and guided climbs for those with experience. There's an artificial climbing wall at Sölden's main sports centre/tourist office, the Freizeitarena (see "swimming"); and rock-climbing trails can be found at various points in the valley – Sölden tourist office has details.

Skiing Skiing is possible on the Rettenbach and Tiefenbach glaciers above Sölden (Oct–May), both reached via the Gletscherstrasse mountain road. In winter, expect to pay around €41.50 for one day, €205.50 for 6 days.

Swimming There's an indoor pool at the Freizeitarena in Sölden (daily 11am–9pm; day ticket €9), above the tourist office and an excellent state-of-the art facility. Aquadome in Längenfeld (daily 9am–10pm; €21; ☎05253/6400600, ⓦwww.aqua-dome.at) with extensive and luxurious pools, giant hot tubs, water slide and one of Austria's finest sauna facilities.

The main centre in the Ötztal itself is the large package resort of **Sölden**. Above it two glaciers enable year-round **skiing** and **snowboarding**, while a bewildering array of trails draws hikers in summer. Further up the valley the Ötztal narrows dramatically before the road arrives at several smaller ski resorts: **Untergurgl**, **Obergurgl** and **Hochgurgl**.

Imst

IMST, the small market town and main regional hub, just north of the Inn Valley and west of Bahnhof Ötztal, is well known for its **Schemenlaufen** (or "ghost dance"), held on a Sunday in February every four or five years (next due in 2009). This large procession of elaborately costumed figures – each with its own lolloping dance – and the accompanying festivities are rooted in pagan rituals designed to drive away the spirit of winter.

Downtown Imst consists of a long main street (named Kramergasse, Johannesplatz then Pfarrgasse respectively) at the northern end of which its **Pfarrkirche** has some arresting outer frescoes, notably an animated fifteenth-century scene of local miners at work. From behind the church you can access the pathway to the **Rosengartenschlucht**, a 1.5-kilometre-long gorge that offers a pleasant torrent-side walk through parkland and forest to the hillside suburb of **Hochimst** to the west. A cable car from Hochimst gives access to a more unusual trip on the **Alpine Coaster** (daily: May–Sept 10am–5pm, late Dec to late March 11am–4pm; €5.70; Ⓦ www.alpine-coaster.at), a sort of bobsleigh on rails that will drop you from 1500m to 500m down the side of the Mannkopf mountain in minutes. If you don't fancy the ninety-minute walk up to Hochimst, and don't have your own transport, take one of three daily buses (€1) from the **tourist office**, Johannesplatz 4 (Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 4–6pm; Ⓣ 05412/69100, Ⓦ www.imst.at). The office will help with accommodation, but charges commission. The Imst-Pitztal **train station** is 3km south of town; regular buses run into the centre.

Sölden and around

A modern resort 40km south of Bahnhof Ötztal, **SÖLDEN** straggles along both banks of the Ötztaler Ache. There's not a great deal to the place: the main street, lined with most of the shops and the bigger hotels, runs along the western side of the river, and a chalet settlement of pensions and tourist apartments spreads along the eastern side. Its winter resort popularity rests on the fact that it offers pistes for all abilities, with plenty of long, steep runs on the two main peaks – the Gaislachkogl and Giggijoch – looming over the village to the west. There's also a fair amount of off-piste skiing, and winter sports are possible in all but the summer months on the **Rettenbach glacier**, accessible from Sölden by road.

A number of routes lead up to the heights above the western side of the valley, where you'll find a variety of summer hiking routes. Walkers should note that there are a number of snow-cleared paths around Sölden and Vent in winter too – a map is available from the tourist office. **Hochsölden**, the mountain suburb located high on a ledge above the town, is accessible by road or via the Hochsölden chairlift (late June to late Sept 9am–noon & 1–4.15pm; €7.50 return) from the northern end of Sölden. From the top station you can pick up a number of panoramic lateral walks, or head a short way south to the *Sonnblick* café-restaurant, a popular summer and winter refreshment point with good views of the valley below. Hochsölden is also the starting point for another chairlift to the **Rotkogel** (same times; return €3), starting point for numerous walks. In winter, the **Giggijochbahn gondola** connects Hochsölden with the Giggijoch, site of a snowboard park.

At the southern end of Sölden, the Gaislachkoglbahn cable car (late June to mid-Sept 9am–3.30pm; return €19.50) offers a two-stage ascent to the 3058-metre **Gaislachkogl** and access to some stupendous panoramic walks. Ask at the tourist information office for walking maps of the area.

Starting just beyond the cable-car station to the south, the **Gletscherstrasse** (open May–Oct; included on lift passes, otherwise cars €16.50, bus passengers €5), is a 12km-long road served by five daily buses from Sölden over the summer. It's more of a sightseeing trip than a route to hiking destinations, climbing steeply towards the **Rettenbach glacier** before traversing a 1.7-kilometre tunnel beneath the Gaislacherkogl to the **Tiefenbach glacier**. Skiing pistes at both glaciers remain open for much of the year, and a range of lifts to higher altitudes – notably the gondola from Tiefenbach to the 3309-metre Tiefenbachkogl. At the height of the winter season, numerous chairlifts and draglifts link Giggijoch, Rettenbach, Gaislachkogl and Tiefenbach to each other, providing excellent conditions for exploring a wide range of pistes.

Practicalities

Buses stop in the main street, just across the river from the **tourist office**, housed in a modern sports and leisure centre known as the Freizeitarena (Mon–Sat 8am–6pm, Sun 9am–noon & 3–6pm; ⓣ057200/200, ⓦwww.soelden.at). The tourist office can give you a list of vacancies in **private rooms** (summer ❷; winter ❸) and **hotels**, and provide a courtesy phone. In summer, a surplus of tourist beds makes finding a room rarely a problem. Of the over 150 family-run **pensions** in Sölden, *Jasmin*, right next to the tourist office at Rettenbach 546 (ⓣ05254/2571; summer ❸; winter ❹), *Mina*, centrally located, but closed during the summer months, a few steps uphill from the Hauptstrasse at Rettenbach 90 (ⓣ05254/2146; ❹), and *Haus Gerold*, (ⓣ05254/2517; summer ❸, winter ❹), on the main road next to the petrol station, are all cosy, friendly and inexpensive. The *Hotel Garni Granat*, Rettenbach 171 (ⓣ05254/2062, ⓦwww.hotel-granat.at; summer ❺, winter ❾), also near the tourist office, offers stylish balconied rooms with en-suite facilities and TV, as well as free use of the Freizeitarena (see above). At the expensive end of the scale, the top-of-the-range *Central Hotel*, Hof 418 (ⓣ05254/22600; ❾), has roomy apartments and an indoor pool, sauna and solarium on site. *Camping Sölden*, at the southern end of town (ⓣ05254/26270, ⓦwww.camping-soelden.com; open all year), is a terraced **campsite** overlooking the river.

Eating recommendations change from season to season, and many venues close in summer. Of the places likely to be open throughout the year, there's not much to choose between the two central pizzerias: flash and loud *Gusto*, on the main street, and *Corso*, on the other side of the river near the tourist office, with a wider variety of Italian dishes and some Austrian, too. *Armin's Törggele Stub'n*, on the tourist office side of the river, serves as a café-cum-wine bar with a good range of Tyrolean and general Austrian food. *Dorf Alm*, a building in the style of a log cabin on the main street opposite the Raiffeisenbank, is a dependable source of inexpensive Tyrolean staples.

Après-ski **drinking** kicks off at the lift stations, and continues in the numerous igloo-shaped bars scattered throughout the town. There's a strip of late-night watering holes on or around the main street: bang in the centre, *Bierhimmel* on the first floor of the Rindlhaus is a rocking, raucous alternative to the more sedate *Café S'Rimele* on the floor below. Next door, *Dominic Bla Bla* is another popular drinking haunt, whilst a little further along the main road to the south you'll find the more gutsy *Fire and Ice.*

Vent, Obergurgl and Hochgurgl

South of Sölden, the main road climbs steeply via a succession of hairpin bends to the hamlet of Zwieselstein, where a secondary road up to the Ventertal (served by daily buses from Sölden in summer) bears to the left. Thirteen kilometres further along is the village of **VENT**, dominated by the Tyrol's highest peak, the 3768-metre **Wildspitze**, rising to the northwest. A **tourist office** in the centre of the village (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 3–6pm; ⓣ057200/260, ⓦwww.vent.at) has a list of **private rooms** (❷ in summer, ❸ in winter). Though favoured by serious climbers because of the wide choice of mountainscapes within striking distance, there are plenty of opportunities around Vent for the less ambitious, with hiking trails leading up starkly beautiful side-valleys like the **Rofental** to the southwest and the **Niedertal** due south.

The head of the Niedertal is overlooked by a high mountain pass known as the Niederjoch, across which shepherds from the Schnaltal on the Italian side of the border drive thousands of sheep every summer in search of grazing land – a practice dating back to the thirteenth century. The timing of the event

Ötzi the ice man

On September 9, 1991, German climbers Erika and Helmut Simon were walking on the Hauslabjoch on the Austrian-Italian border when they noticed a half-exposed human form protruding from the ice of the Similaun Glacier. The couple reported the find to the local police upon their arrival at the nearest alpine hut, and a helicopter was sent to investigate the following day. It took another three days for police and mountain rescue teams to free the body from the ice, during which time it became apparent that this was an extraordinary find. The world-renowned Tyrolean mountaineer Reinhold Messner, who visited the site out of curiosity because he happened to be in the area, immediately declared the corpse to be at least 3000 years old. Such an estimate was considered wildly exaggerated at the time, although it was enough to encourage Austrian state television to send a camera team to film the corpse being airlifted off the mountain – footage beamed around the world as soon as the true importance of the find became known. Archeologists from Innsbruck University were on the scene within a week to retrieve objects found alongside the corpse, although it wasn't until the body had been subjected to carbon dating that the ice man's true age – about 5500 years – was established.

Christened **Ötzi** in honour of the Ötztal above which he was found, the ice man yielded a wealth of new information about Neolithic culture in the region. Not only was the body remarkably well preserved, revealing a dark-haired, blue-eyed individual sporting charcoal tattoos, but he'd also taken a wide range of Stone Age artefacts to his grave. He was equipped with well-made shoes featuring separate soles and uppers, a bearskin hat, a flint knife, and a rudimentary rucksack made of skins mounted on a wooden frame. How he came to be on the Hauslabjoch remains the subject of much conjecture, although the theory that the Neolithic population on both sides of the Alps was using the high mountain passes to conduct trade remains appealing.

Ötzi soon became a symbol of Austrian, and more specifically Tyrolean, pride, even though it had been common knowledge in the days following Ötzi's discovery that the exact spot on which he was found lay a full 10m on the wrong side of Austria's border with Italy. Despite Ötzi's adoption by a fascinated Austrian public, he technically belonged to the Italians. Notwithstanding the strong local passions aroused, the Austrian and Italian governments just about succeeded in turning the Ötzi case into an example of cooperation rather than nationalist tub-thumping, allowing Innsbruck University to proceed with their analysis of the body on the understanding that he would ultimately be handed over to the Italians. While most Austrians were resigned to the move, the choice of the Italian city of Bolzano (which, under the name of Bozen, was part of Austria until 1918) as his final resting place rubbed salt into some Tyrolean wounds, and one shadowy group of Austrian nationalists threatened to destroy the corpse should it ever leave Austrian soil. In January 1998, however, Ötzi departed from Innsbruck complete with police escort to take up residence in Bolzano, to the £6-million museum built in his honour.

depends on the weather, so contact the tourist office in Sölden for details. Just west of the Niederjoch is the Hauslabjoch, where the 5500-year-old corpse known as **Ötzi** (rendered inelegantly into English as "Frozen Fritz") was discovered by German hikers in September 1991.

Obergurgl and Hochgurgl

After Zwieselstein, the main southbound road continues climbing towards the hamlet of Untergurgl, before ascending above the tree line a few kilometres further on to **OBERGURGL**, its valley girdled by glaciers and hemmed in by ridges and summits well in excess of 3000m. It's a place that revolves largely around winter sports, although a steady stream of hikers is drawn here over the

summer by an unparalleled menu of alpine walks (see box below). The local **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ☎05256/6466, ⓦwww.obergurgl.com) is in the centre of the village – where buses from Sölden stop – and has lists of **private rooms** in Obergurgl and Untergurgl as well as Hochgurgl higher up.

Beyond Obergurgl, the road doubles back on itself to rise to **HOCHGURGL**, the highest settlement in the Tyrol and another winter resort in its own right. From here, a **toll road** (June–Oct 7am–8pm; €13 single, €17 return per car)

Hut to hut in the Ötztaler Alps

Obergurgl and the Gurglertal

The downhill ski industry has claimed some of the slopes around **Obergurgl**, but plenty of good walks remain amidst dramatic mountain scenery. One of the best, which doesn't involve glacier crossing, is to the *Hochwildehaus* (phone the *Langtalereck Hütte*: ☎0664/5268-655), a hut set fabulously on the east bank of the Gurglerferner glacier, at the head of which rise the Hochwilde (3482m), Annakogel (3336m), Mitterkamm (3200m) and Karles-Spitze (3469m), among other peaks. The route is straightforward, takes about **four to five hours** from Obergurgl, and visits both the *Schönwies* and *Langtalereck* huts on the way. Both of these are in idyllic locations – the first at the mouth of the Rotmoostal glen, the second with a full frontal view of the Gurglerferner's icefall.

On the west flank of the Gurglertal, opposite the *Langtalereck* Hütte but almost four hundred metres higher, sits the *Ramolhaus* (☎05256/6223), another DAV hut wardened in the summer months. A recommended walk to it along the Ötztaler Jungschützenweg takes about **three and a half hours** from Obergurgl, and makes an excellent introduction to the valley. There is, however, a **longer traverse** for fit walkers, along a trail that begins at Zwieselstein about 18km from the *Ramolhaus*, and with a difference in altitude of 1556m. Several small tarns add sparkle to the landscape along the way, and there are a few modest summits accessible to walkers on the ridge above. The most northerly is the 3163-metre Nederkogel, from whose summit you can see the snowy masses of the Ötztaler Alps spread in a great arc, while to the east, across the deep Ötztal, the Stubai Alps are equally impressive.

Across the Ötztaler Alps

A reasonably tough **three-day crossing** of the north flank of the Ötztaler Alps, avoiding glaciers but nudging the highest peaks, travels amidst outstanding alpine scenery. It starts in the Kaunertal on the district's western fringe, where the rustic *Gepatschhaus* (☎05475/215 or ☎0664/534-9044) provides overnight accommodation at the southern end of the **Gepatschspeicher reservoir** (reached by infrequent bus from Landeck via Prutz). From here a meandering trail climbs eastwards to the 3095-metre Ölgrubenjoch, a bare saddle with stunning views of the Wildspitze ahead to the east. Above to the right, the Hinterer Ölgrubenspitze (3296m) is worth an hour's detour if you have the energy. From the Ölgrubenjoch you descend steeply into a glacial basin below the Sexegertenferner to gain the *Taschach Haus* (☎05413/8239), a DAV hut often used as a base for ice-climbing courses – there's an impressive icefall nearby, which provides an ideal training ground. Day 2 continues down-valley as far as Riffelsee along the balcony path known as the Fuldaer Höhenweg; you then descend to Mittelberg before starting a demanding ascent to the *Braunschweiger Hütte* (☎05413/86236) set on the edge of a turmoil of glaciers, with the Wildspitze now to the southwest. Day 3 scrambles along a ridge above the hut (there's a herd of ibex here), negotiates the Pitztaler Jöchl (2995m) and descends through the wooded Reifenbachtal to Sölden, in the upper reaches of the Ötztal.

A recommended **map** for either of the above tours is the Kompass *Wanderkarte 43* (Ötztaler Alpen), 1:50,000. For more on the Austrian hut-to-hut system, see p.47.

ascends to the 2509-metre **Timmelsjoch Pass**, which offers breathtaking panoramas before beginning a tortuous descent into the Italian South Tyrol.

The Landeck region

Beyond Bahnhof Ötztal at the mouth of the Ötztal valley, the main westbound road and rail routes continue to follow the River Inn as far as **Landeck**, where they leave the valley to begin their slow ascent of the Arlberg Pass. Provincial, workaday Landeck is of no great beauty, but it can be a good base from which to visit the adjacent valleys of the **Oberinntal** (or Upper Inn Valley) and the **Paznaun**, the name given to the valley of the **River Trisanna**. The Oberinntal harbours a string of small, low-key alpine resorts – **Ladis**, **Fiss**, **Serfaus**, **Pfunds** and **Nauders** are the places to aim for – while the Paznaun boasts the much ritzier skiing village **Ischgl**, an international package-holiday favourite.

Landeck

Originally a fortress town guarding the eastern approaches to the Arlberg Pass, **LANDECK** is today a pretty drab, semi-industrialized place, important to travellers as a source of buses into the surrounding mountains rather than as an attraction in its own right. Occupying a hillside above the River Inn to the southeast, central Landeck huddles below the fifteenth-century **Pfarrkirche St Oswald**, a beautifully proportioned late-Gothic structure built by Oswald von Schrofenstein, erstwhile lord of a (now-ruined) castle that clings to the hillside on the opposite side of the river. The high altar (the so-called *Schrofensteinaltar* of 1513) centres on a scene of the Adoration; the predella shows St Oswald, together with Oswald von Schrofenstein and wife, kneeling in prayer. Von Schrofenstein's symbol, a rampant goat, adorns both his tomb, on the south wall of the nave, and his *Totenschild*, or memorial shield, by the high altar.

Uphill from the church, the thirteenth-century **Schloss Landeck** houses a fairly parochial **folk museum** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; €6.50), proffering the usual range of Tyrolean wooden furniture, and a room devoted to Jakob Prandtauer, the local architect responsible for the famous Benedictine abbey at Melk (see p.174). Period rooms upstairs include an example of the *Rauchkuche*, the open-hearthed kitchens common in Tyrolean farmhouses, and a display of the floral headdresses worn by cows (the better the milk yield, the bigger the headdress) at the time of the *Almabtrieb*, the mid-September descent from the high alpine pastures.

Practicalities

Landeck **train station** is 2km east of town, from where half-hourly local buses trundle to the **bus station** at the northern end of the main street, Malserstrasse. The **tourist office**, at the southern end of Malserstrasse (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 8am–noon; ⓣ05442/65600, ⓦwww.tirolwest.at), will help with **private rooms** (1), although most are in surrounding villages rather than in Landeck itself (you'll need your own transport). In the centre of Landeck on the east bank of the Inn, *Gasthof Greif*, Marktplatz (ⓣ05442/62268; 3), is an old-style inn but with pleasant, bright rooms, while *Hotel Schrofenstein*, Malserstrasse (ⓣ05442/62395, ⓦwww.schrofenstein.at; 4), is the best of the big business hotels on the main street. Of Landeck's two **campsites** west of the centre on the road towards the Arlberg the more central and quieter is *Camping Riffler*, Bruggfeldstr 2 (ⓣ05442/64898), on the south bank of the Sanna.

For **eating**, *Gasthof Greif* serves up substantial, no-nonsense schnitzel-and-chips-style meals, while the restaurant in the *Schrofenstein* also does more international dishes from around €7.50. The *Picasso Café*, behind the Bäcker Reutz bakery near the tourist office on Malserstrasse, is one of the most popular choices in town for a midday coffee or late night **drink**.

The Oberinntal

Southwest of Landeck, the main road follows the River Inn into the **Oberinntal**, a wide vale surrounded by high Alps. Twelve kilometres out of town the village of **PRUTZ** offers a choice of routes: either straight on towards the Swiss border or uphill westwards to a terrace of highland pastures, and a sequence of three small resort villages. On the lip of the terrace is **LADIS**, a ruined castle at its centre, with excellent views across the valley towards the mountains of the Kaunertal. *Gasthof Rose* on the main road serves good Tyrolean fare. The road continues along rolling pasturelands to **FISS**, dominated by large, modern chalet-style hotels, which has a **tourist office** on the main road. Four kilometres further on, **SERFAUS** has been equally commercialized, although the core of the village still retains a great deal of character. It's both a resort and a working agricultural village, where chickens strut the back alleys and the smell of dung is never far away. **Buses** from Landeck stop outside the **tourist office** (April–Nov Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1pm–5pm; Dec–March Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1pm–5pm, Sun 10am–noon; ⓣ05476/62390, ⓦwww.serfaus-fiss-ladis.at) in the centre, which will help with accommodation. Just above the tourist office, the squat, medieval pilgrimage church of **Unsere Liebe Frau** has fragments of fifteenth-century frescoes.

Seventeen kilometres south of Prutz, **PFUNDS** is a village that lacks extensive ski slopes of its own but nevertheless serves as a winter resort with access to pistes further up the valley around Nauders. In summer, it's a good base for hiking and the late-Gothic high altar in the village **Pfarrkirche** provides another reason to stop.

Three kilometres south of Pfunds, a right fork in the road leads up the Schergenbach Valley to the small ski resort of **SAMNAUN**. Although part of Switzerland, Samnaun is only accessible from the Austrian side of the border, and enjoys special, **duty-free status** – thereby making it a popular day-trip destination for tourists and shoppers. Its cable car links it to Ischgl's ski area and in summer is covered by the **Montafon-Silvretta-Card** (see p.550).

The main road south of Pfunds continues to follow the upper Inn Valley into Switzerland, where the Oberinntal becomes the Engadine. **Buses** from Landeck and Pfunds run to Scuol, where you can pick up connections to the glitzy resorts of St Moritz and Davos. Alternatively, you can take a southeast-bound road that stays on the Austrian side of the border, climbing over the Finstermünzpass to **NAUDERS**, another ski-resort village with hiking opportunities in the summer.

The Paznaun

Narrow and densely wooded, with alpine pastures dotted with log-built barns covering the valley floor, it's easy to see the **Paznaun**'s rustic appeal. **Ischgl** is the valley's main centre, although **Kappl**, in the lower reaches of the valley, and **Galtür**, at the southern end of the valley, are small resorts in their own right. Use of all local public transport and swimming pools along with all the cable cars and gondolas is covered in the summer by the useful **Montafon-Silvretta-Card** (see p.550), available to all those overnighting in the valley.

Ischgl

Sprawled across the eastern slopes of the valley 30km southwest of Landeck, **ISCHGL** is a modern village that relies almost exclusively on the winter trade, with slopes catering for all ability ranges on the Idalp, east of town, which is linked by lifts to the neighbouring ski area of Samnaun. Main drawbacks are the package-resort artificiality of the place and its increasingly high prices. In summer, Ischgl is relatively quiet and many of its restaurants and bars are closed, but there are plenty of possible itineraries for summer hikers, most immediate of which is to take the Silvrettabahn gondola, which ascends to the 2320-metre **Idalp**. There are numerous marked trails on top: one popular circuit is to walk eastwards and descend by cable car to Samnaun in the next valley in Switzerland, where you can return to Ischgl by bus via Landeck (check the local tourist office for times before attempting this route). **Mountain biking** is also extremely popular since the resort has a large network of lift-accessible trails; ask for a free booklet of rides at the tourist office; you can hire bikes at Intersport, just opposite the *Hotel Post* in the village centre.

Ischgl's **tourist office**, in the town centre opposite the main bus stop (daily: winter 8am–6.30pm; summer 8am–noon & 2–6pm ⓣ050990/100, ⓦwww.ischgl.com), will help you find a **private room** (summer ❶; winter ❷) or **hotel** beds.

Galtür

Ten kilometres up the Paznaun Valley from Ischgl, **GALTÜR** is a small village serving the winter-package trade, traditionally slightly cheaper than its neighbour and popular with beginners. The place hit the headlines in 1999 when several families and their holidaymaking guests fell victim to a sudden landslide that smothered much of the western side of the village. Though 26 people were saved in an international rescue attempt that was accompanied by considerable media frenzy, 31 died.

With the possibility of a recurrence in mind the town has since built a 345-metre-long and 19-metre-high protective wall on the southwest side of town. This wall forms part of **Alpinarium Galtür** (ⓣ05443/20000, ⓦwww.alpinarium.at) a huge civic building that fulfills a number of local functions, including providing a fire station, but which is best known for its funky interior design. This celebrates the elements and local landscape: corridors have been made into tunnels, rocks dangle in the main atrium, glass features have been made to look like glaciers. Exploring the architectural imagination is what makes its **museum** (Tues-Sun 10am–6pm; €8) of local mountain life worthwhile, plus the footage it has of the accident is intriguing and its memorials to the tragedy touching. Elsewhere in the building, and accessible to the general public for free, is a bright little café with a large outdoor terrace, a good line in smoothies and several Internet terminals as well as a viewing platform on the roof where you can pick out the course of the 1999 avalanche. There's also a climbing wall, where beginners' courses take place on Thursdays at 6pm.

Galtür's **tourist office** (ⓣ050990/200, ⓦwww.galtuer.com) can help with **accommodation**, advise on local hiking and biking routes and point you in the direction of the town's swanky recreation centre – free to use by holders of the **Montafon-Silvretta-Card** (see p.550). Above Galtür, the **Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse** toll road leads to the Montafon Valley (see p.550). Buses from Landeck run over the pass to the Bielerhöhe pass where you can pick up onward connections to Schruns.

The Arlberg

Straddling Tyrol's border with Vorarlberg, the dramatic **Arlberg** massif is home to mountainscapes of desolate beauty that harbour some of Austria's most varied and challenging skiing. Feasting on all this natural bounty are a string of expensive winter resorts: party-orientated **St Anton** and tiny **St Christoph** foot the slopes of the region's highest peak, the 2809-metre **Valluga**, on the eastern, Tyrolean, side, where extensive off-piste opportunities have made them Austria's prime destination for expert skiers. Beginners are well catered for too, particularly in the ritzy neighbouring resorts of **Zürs** and **Lech**, in Vorarlberg to the west. You can stay at any of these resorts and use facilities in the whole region. Passes allow you to ski from one resort to another, and include in their price the frequent and quick bus services between them.

St Anton

A fashionable winter tourism centre since the 1920s, **ST ANTON** rivals Kitzbühel as the Tyrol's swishest society resort. However, St Anton is much more of a magnet for the serious skier, offering a more challenging range of steep descents and off-piste opportunities than anywhere else in Austria. Possibilities for beginners do exist, but with over a third of the runs being black, they're more limited than elsewhere, and often crowded. Indeed the popularity of St Anton ensures that there's a fair crush throughout the winter season, which usually begins slightly earlier than elsewhere in the country (the beginning of Dec) and can last well into April. Accommodation and restaurant prices are sky-high throughout this period, but there's no doubt that the town is an invigorating place to be, attracting a ski-hard and play-hard clientele who generate a raucous nightlife. The place reverts to a state of rural slumber over the summer, when many bars and restaurants close, and a less hedonistic crowd of hikers and mountain-sightseers moves in.

Arrival, information and accommodation

St Anton's ultramodern **train and bus station** is just south of town, a short walk from the **tourist office** at the west end of the Dorfstr 8 (Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; Sat & Sun 9am–noon; ⓣ05446/22690, ⓦwww.stantonamarlberg.com) who can help you find a **private room** (❷–❸) or check hotel vacancies; there's also a hotel information board and courtesy phone just outside. In general, rooms are cheaper in the suburb of St Jakob – reachable using St Anton-Landeck buses, or ski buses in season – which stretches for several kilometres to the east of St Anton, providing a much more rustic and evocative area in which to stay than the centre of town.

Among the cheaper of the **pensions** are *Tiroler Frieden*, Dorfstr 75 (ⓣ05446/2247, ⓦwww.st-anton-arlberg.com summer ❷; winter ❹), a simple place just east of St Anton's pedestrianized centre with rooms sharing facilities, and an English-speaking owner. A five-minute walk from the Nassereibahn gondola towards St Jakob, *Haus Bergfrieden*, Untere Nassereinerstr 7 (ⓣ05446/2692, ⓔhaus.bergfrieden@st-anton.at; ❺), offers cosy en suites with TV. Moving up in price, *Schindler*, Alte Arlbergstr 16 (ⓣ05446/2207, ⓦwww.hotel-schindler.at; summer ❺; winter ❾), is a small upmarket pension offering large, luxurious en-suite rooms, west of the tourist office. The *Kaminstube am Moos*, St Anton 112 (ⓣ05446/2681, ⓦwww.kaminstube.com; summer ❸; winter ❽), is a modern **hotel** hovering above the valley in the mountain suburb of Moos, handy for après-ski venues such as the *Mooserwirt* and *Krazy Kanguruh*.

St Anton lift passes

The **Arlbergskipass** (valid for all 83 lifts around St Anton, St Christoph, Stuben, Lech and Zürs) is available from anything from half a day to the whole winter season (Dec–April). Sample high-season costs are €41.50 for 1 day; €199 for 6 days; €347 for 13 days, including the half-hourly ski bus that runs between all the resorts.

The equivalent summer 7-day **hiking pass** covers all St Anton lifts at a cost of €30 with use of St Anton's indoor swimming pool thrown in, whereas the St Anton Card (€45 for 7 days) will get you all that plus free admission to the Heimatmuseum, a guided tour and a free minigolf game.

The most characterful and luxurious place to stay in the centre is the 4-star *Alte Post*, Dorfstr 11 (Ⓣ05446/2553, Ⓦwww.hotel-alte-post.at; 9).

The Town

St Anton's history as a resort began in 1901 when the Arlberg Ski club was formed, largely on the initiative of local hotelier Carl Schuler, who was eager to stimulate winter tourism. Schuler engaged local man **Hannes Schneider** to teach the guests to ski, and the techniques developed by Schneider have formed the backbone of Austrian ski-school practice ever since. Together with British winter sports pioneer Sir Arnold Lunn, Schneider inaugurated the **Kandahar Cup** in 1928, a classic downhill race that still features in the World Cup calendar every December. St Anton's reputation for glamour was boosted by German director Arnold Fanck's decision to shoot the film *Der Weisse Rausch* (*White Frenzy*) here in 1931, a tale of love and adventure on the pistes which not only helped to make a star out of Hannes Schneider, but also featured future purveyor of Nazi propaganda **Leni Riefenstahl** in the female lead. Both Fanck and Riefenstahl went on to make many more snow-bound adventures for the German-speaking market, carving out a ski-film genre that is nowadays honoured in the annual **St Anton Film Festival** (in Aug or Sept; Ⓦwww.filmfest-stanton.at) that shows some of the old features alongside contemporary alpine and adventure sports films.

Into the mountains

St Anton itself isn't much more than a long strip of hotels, restaurants and boutiques in a central, pedestrianized portion (or *Fussgängerzone*), and there's little in the way of sights: it's the immense mountain ridges on either side that give the place its charm. If you want to just stretch your legs, it's easy enough to get up onto the lower slopes. Paths at the southwestern end of the main strip head uphill to the small **Heimatmseum** (June 20–Sept 20, Tues–Sun 11am–5pm; mid-Dec to Easter Mon–Sat 3–10pm; €3), with a small display on traditional local crafts and the history of skiing housed in the so-called Arlberg-Kandahar Haus, a gaily painted wooden house built in 1912. Head for the crazy-golf course behind the museum to find a path that ascends (steeply in parts) alongside the **Mühltobelslucht**, a tiny wooded gorge, before emerging in the hillside suburb of Dengert. From here you can head for the *Sennhütte* café-restaurant just above, whose terrace commands invigorating views of the Rindl and Hoher Riffler peaks on the south side of the valley, or pick up lateral paths leading east along the hillside which offer superb, bird's-eye views of St Anton.

There are numerous lifts and gondolas serving higher altitudes, creating an enormous interconnected skiing and hiking area. On the western side of town, the **Galzigbahn** (mid-July to late Sept; €11 return) rises to the 2185-metre

Galzig (also served by a lift from St Christoph), where a two-stage cable car (same times; €17 return) continues upwards to the 2811-metre **Valluga**, passing through the 2650-metre **Vallugagrat** middle station en route. It's the extreme skiing territory on the slopes of the Valluga, especially the off-piste routes down the far side of the mountain to Zürs (see p.529), which you're only allowed to attempt with a guide, that attract the more experienced winter sportspeople. Slightly to the north of the Galzigbahn is the start of the **Gampenbahn** chairlift (mid-June to late Aug; €11 return) which ascends to the 1846-metre **Gampen** plateau, where there are several intermediate runs back down towards town. The Gampen area is also served by the **Nassereinbahn** gondola which departs from the eastern end of St Anton, and links up with the **Kapallbahn** chairlift to the 2330-metre **Kappal** (June–Aug; €11), with a challenging black run right back down to St Anton. There's a slightly less hair-raising snowboard funpark, with half-pipe, jumps and slides on the **Rendl**, just east of St Anton and also accessible by gondola.

Eating and drinking

Eating and drinking in St Anton is pretty expensive by Austrian standards, although cheaper options are never too hard to find; there are self-service restaurants and bars at the upper stations of all the main gondola routes. The *Panoramarestaurant* on the Galzig contains a reasonably priced pizza and pasta section, as well as the more expensive, à la carte *Verwallstube*. Among the more traditional mountain huts, the *Rodelalm*, just above town on the lower flanks of the Gampen, is the best place to sample traditional Tyrolean *Gröstl* dishes at prices that won't prove ruinous. Down in St Anton, the *Arlberger Dorfbäckerei* in the *Fussgängerzone* has a cheap stand-up **snack bar** where you can grab coffee and pastries during the daytime. Best of the sit-down **cafés** is the comfy, pine-furnished *Häferl* near the tourist office, which offers the full range of drinks as well as a tempting choice of sandwiches, soups, and strudels. Nearby *Café Schneider* is more staid in style, but has the same range of food and drink at slightly cheaper prices. The more expensive *Montjola*, Gastiweg 29 (☎05446/2302; open Dec–April), tempts discerning diners with its fondue specialities, whilst the intimate **restaurant** in *Schindler* (see "Accommodation") produces some of the best regional cooking in town, although you need to book ahead.

In winter, **après-ski** begins on the upper slopes in mid-afternoon and gradually moves down to the valley below. Two semi-legendary places high above town, right on the ski slopes, are *Krazy Kanguruh* and *Mooserwirt*, both of which attract a hedonistic, youngish crowd and can be relied upon to generate a party atmosphere any night of the week. Down in the centre, *Bobo's* (also open at weekends in the summer), in the basement of the *Kristall* hotel on Dorfstrasse, is a big, raucous subterranean bar which also does decent Tex-Mex and burger-type food; while the *Piccadilly Pub*, beneath *Hotel Post* in the *Fussgängerzone*, does a roaring trade in winter. The *Funky Chicken* nearby (winter only) has fun and rowdy theme nights. The *Mail Box* Internet café, Dorfstr 54 (July–Aug Mon–Fri noon–5pm; Nov–April daily 8.30am–8.30pm), publishes a host of useful listings and information for those who've come to St Anton looking for winter work.

St Christoph am Arlberg

Approaching the region from Landeck, the main westbound road and rail routes follow the Rosanna Valley upstream into the Stanzertal, entering tunnels at St Anton that emerge 10km later on the Vorarlberg side of the 1793-metre **Arlberg Pass**. A minor road from St Anton winds its way over the pass itself

(served by local buses working the St Anton–Lech route), passing through the chic skiing hamlet of **ST CHRISTOPH AM ARLBERG**. Today a small cluster of top-notch holiday dwellings, the resort began life as a fourteenth-century hospice built by local shepherd Heinrich Fidelkind von Kempten. The hospice building survived until 1957 when it was destroyed by fire, and a luxury hotel, the *Hospitz-Alm* (Ⓣ05446/2611, Ⓦwww.hospiz.com; ❾), has now been built in its place. It's been a fairly snooty place ever since, and tourist development has been deliberately limited in an attempt to preserve its exclusivity.

Zürs and Lech

A secondary road heads north from St Christoph over the **Flexen Pass** to two of Austria's most upmarket alpine resorts, **ZÜRS** and **LECH**, which lie 5km apart in a beautiful highland valley. Both places are easy to reach by bus from Langen am Arlberg train station, where most services on the main line to Innsbruck stop. The range of **skiing** is varied enough to cater for all abilities, with more family-oriented terrain than nearby St Anton, and has secured the region's popularity, although its reputation as a high-society playground helps to set it apart from the rest of alpine Austria. Outside the winter season, hiking opportunities are excellent, and accommodation rates are bearable, but many of the cafés and restaurants close their doors, making the essential soullessness of the place all too apparent.

The smaller of the two settlements, **Zürs**, is little more than a clump of four-star hotels, although Lech still preserves a smidgeon of rural charm thanks to some attractive alpine houses, and a dainty Gothic **Pfarrkirche** which surveys the village centre from a small hillock. Inside are some faded fourteenth-century frescoes where mourners are depicted gathering around the death-bed of the Virgin Mary. Quickest routes into the mountains are provided by two cable cars, one to the mountainside settlement of **Oberlech** uphill to the west, and the other to the 2350-metre **Rüfikopf**, which towers above Lech to the east, and from where you can either ski or walk down to Zurs. It's above Oberlech that most of the intermediate **skiing** terrain is located, although a well-organized lift system ensures that you can access a wide range of different runs in a single day's skiing; the Weisses Ring route will take you from Lech through Zürs and Zug via a series of lifts and intermediate slopes. More challenging off-piste routes also abound, such as *Die Höll,* or Hell, which careers down the looming Omeshorn to the south of the village. For ski-pass information see p.527.

Practicalities

Lech's **tourist office** (May–Nov Mon–Sat 8am–noon & 2–6pm, Sun 8am–noon & 3-5pm; Dec–April Mon–Sat 9am–6.30pm, Sun 10am–noon & 3pm–5pm; Ⓣ05583/2161-0, Ⓦwww.lech-zuers.at), on the main road in the centre of town, will book you into a **private room** (summer ❷, winter ❸) and provide information on hotel vacancies. In summer you can exchange your accommodation guest card for the Active Inclusive Summer card, which will get you free local transport and access to cable cars and swimming pools for Lech, Zürs, Zug and Oberlech. One of the few affordable **pensions** in town is the small, family-run *Haus Jehle*, Lech 242 (Ⓣ05583/2380, Ⓦwww.lech-zuers.at/jehle; summer ❸, winter ❺), 1km north of the centre on the Warth road. Of the **hotels**, the *Elisabeth,* Lech 285 (Ⓣ05583/2330, Ⓦwww.hotelelisabeth.com; summer ❻; winter ❾), a medium-sized four-star located just uphill from the main street, has comfortable en suites and its own swimming pool; while the *Gasthof Post*, centrally located at

Lech 11 (Ⓣ05583/2206-0, Ⓦwww.postlech.com; 9), is the top address in the village and has standards of comfort and prices to match anything in Austria – doubles start at €580 in the high season.

For **eating**, *Don Enzo Due* just opposite the post office offers affordable pizza and pasta dishes from €8 upwards, as well as more expensive Italian treats such as a decent *Saltimbocca alla Romana*. The restaurant of the nearby *Hotel Krone*, just below the church, has a reputation for top-quality Austrian and international food, although it's the restaurant of the *Gasthof Post*, unsurprisingly, that comes out on top in the gourmet stakes. Nightlife in Lech is almost non-existent in summer, and in winter fashions change pretty quickly: as a general rule, **après-ski** activity revolves around glitzy hotel bars, with the bar in hotel *s'Pfefferkoerndl*, right next to *Gasthof Post*, usually a good bet, although in general there's a lack of the egalitarian fun-pubs that you'll find in other Austrian resorts.

Travel details

Trains

Innsbruck to: Bahnhof-Ötztal (38 daily; 30–50min); Bregenz (7 daily; 2hr 40min); Ehrwald (9 daily; 1hr 50min); Fritzens-Wattens (25 daily; 16min); Fulpmes (7 daily; 50min); Graz (3 daily; 6hr 15min); Hall (26 daily; 8min); Imst-Pitztal (25 daily; 40min–1hr); Jenbach (every 30min; 20–35min); Kitzbühel (30 daily; 1hr 10min); Kufstein (every 30min; 45min–1hr 10min); Landeck (28 daily; 45min–1hr 35min); Rattenberg (20 daily; 45min); Reutte (9 daily; 2hr 30min); St Anton (14 daily; 1hr 30min); Salzburg (13 daily; 2–3hr 40min); Schwaz (30 daily; 27min); Seefeld (15 daily; 35min); Stams (25 daily; 35min); Vienna (11 daily; 5hr 15min–7hr 10min); Villach (1 daily; 4hr 10min); Wörgl (every 30min; 35–55min).

Jenbach to: Achensee (June–Sept: 7 daily; 45min; May & Oct: 3 daily; 45min); Mayrhofen (12 daily; 1hr); Zell am Ziller (12 daily; 45min).

Kitzbühel to: Graz (3 daily; 5hr 5min); Salzburg (8 daily; 2hr 30min–3hr 10min); Vienna (2 daily; 6hr); Wörgl (29 daily; 30min).

Buses

Bahnhof Ötztal to: Hochgurgl (6 daily; 1hr 50min); Obergurgl (6 daily; 1hr 25min); Sölden (6 daily; 1hr 5min).

Ehrwald to: Lermoos (7 daily; 10min); Reutte (7 daily; 40min).

Hall to: Tulfes (9 daily; 20min); Wattens (every 30min; 10min).

Imst to: Landeck (9 daily; 30min); Ehrwald (8 daily; 20min).

Innsbruck to: Ehrwald (6 daily; 1hr 50min); Fulpmes (18 daily; 40min); Graz Igls (11 daily; 15min); Lermoos (6 daily; 2hr); Reutte (6 daily; 2hr 30min); Tulfes (9 daily; 40min); Wattens (every 30min; 35min).

Jenbach to: Achenkirch (6 daily; 45min); Maurach (6 daily; 25min).

Kufstein to: Ebbs (12 daily; 15min); Söll (8 daily; 25min); Thiersee (6 daily; 15min).

Landeck to: Fiss (6 daily; 45min); Galtür (12 daily; 1hr 5min); Ischgl (12 daily; 45min); Ladis (6 daily; 35min); Nauders (6 daily; 1hr 5min); Pfunds (6 daily; 45min); Prutz (10 daily; 20min); St Anton (Mon–Fri 12 daily; Sat 9 daily; Sun 4 daily; 50min); Serfaus (6 daily; 1hr).

Mayrhofen to: Gerloss Pass (2 daily; 50min); Hintertux (hourly; 45min); Krimml (2 daily; 1hr 35min); Schlegeis Stausee (8 daily; 50min); Stillupgrund Gasthof Wasserfälle (5 daily; 25min); Stillupgrund Grüne-Wand-Hütte (3 daily; 45min); Zillergrund Stausee (daily; 55min).

Prutz to: the Weissee glacier (2 daily; 1hr 10min).

Reutte to: Lech (summer only: 3 daily; 2hr 10min).

St Anton to: Flirsch (hourly; 20min); Rauzalpe (7 daily; 15min); St Christoph (7 daily; 12min).

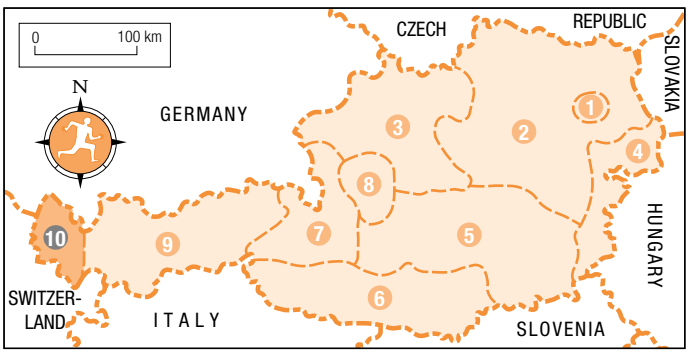
Schwaz to: Schloss Tratzberg (6 daily; 15min); Stans (6 daily; 10min); Wattens (21 daily; 12 min).

Sölden to: Tiefenbach glacier (4 daily; 50min); Vent (3 daily; 40min); Zwieselstein (4 daily; 5min).

Wörgl to: Auffach (8 daily; 45min); Ellmau (7 daily; 55min); Niederau (7 daily; 25min); Oberau (7 daily; 35min); Scheffau (7 daily; 45min); Söll (7 daily; 30min).

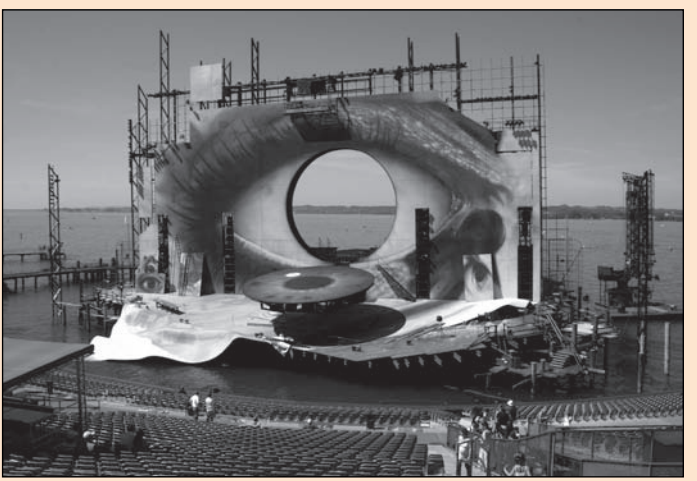
10

Vorarlberg



CHAPTER 10 Highlights

- **Bregenzer Festspiele** (Bregenz Festival) Vorarlberg's biggest cultural event, held every year from late July to August, showcasing everything from opera to musicals on a floating stage right on the Bodensee. See p.535
- **Bregenzerwald** Sample mildly tangy local Bergkäse or mountain cheeses in a traditional wooden *Gasthof*. See p.541
- **Damüls** Deep in the heart of the lush Bregenzerwald region, Damüls is one of the most laid back and intimate ski resorts in winter, whilst in summer it offers stunning walks through the peaceful rolling countryside. See p.546
- **Feldkirch** Wander through Feldkirch's medieval centre, one of Vorarlberg's prettiest towns, taking time to browse the shops or stop for a coffee at one of the cafés. See p.549
- **Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse** Austria's spectacular alpine drive to the mountain summit where you can gaze towards the snow-capped Swiss Alps or stop off for a walk around the pristine Silvretta Reservoir on your way over the Tyrolean border. See p.553



▲ Floating stage, Bregenz

10

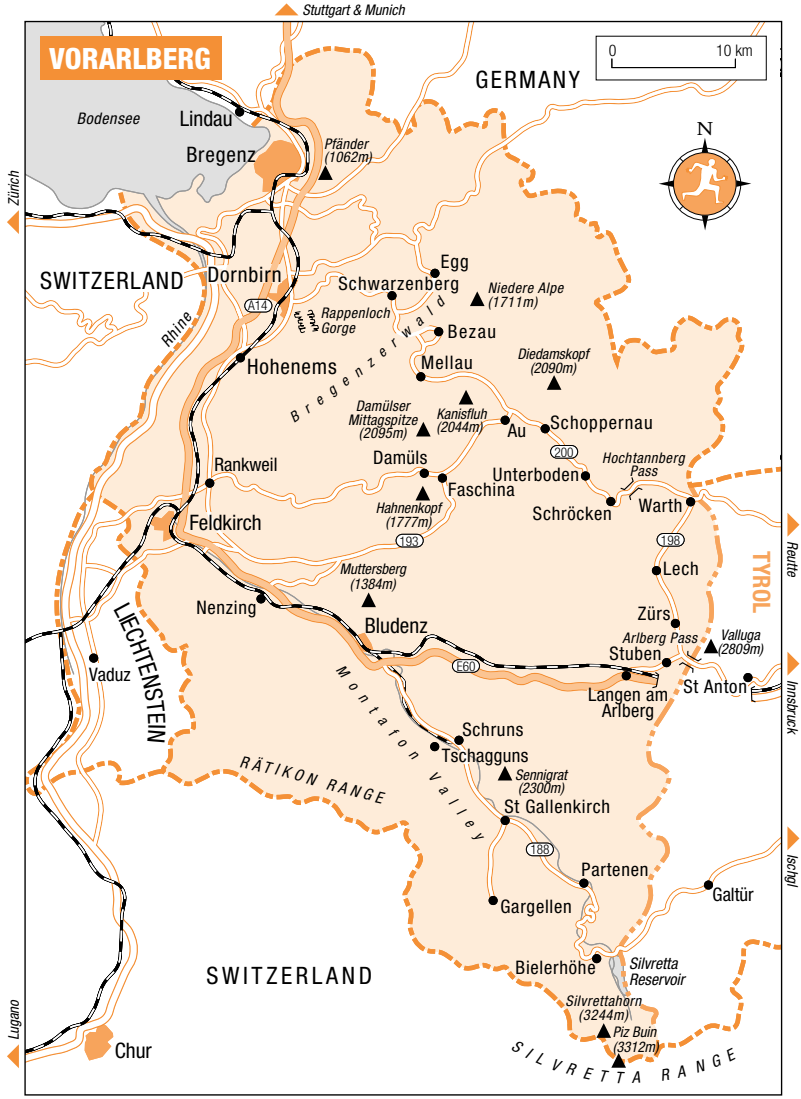
Vorarlberg

Despite falling under Habsburg control as early as the thirteenth century, Austria's westernmost province, **Vorarlberg** (Ⓦ www.vol.at/tourismus), has always led a life slightly separate from the rest of the country. This was largely a matter of geography: bounded by the **Arlberg** mountain range to the east and the **Rätikon** massif to the south, communication with the rest of Austria was for centuries less than easy. Only with the construction of the Arlbergstrasse highway by Emperor Josef II in the late eighteenth century was the region properly integrated with its eastern neighbours.

Culturally and economically, Vorarlberg has repeatedly looked towards Switzerland and southern Germany. Like the inhabitants of northern Switzerland, Vorarlbergers are descended from the **Aleman tribes** who swept through the region during the great migrations of the sixth century AD, and to this day they speak a dialect very close to Swiss German. Indeed, in November 1918 the Vorarlbergers went so far as to declare independence from Austria, seeking union with Switzerland – a request turned down by an international community who feared that any break-up of the infant Austrian state would leave the region prone to future German expansionism. Vorarlberger separatism no longer occupies a prime place on the political agenda, but locals are still likely to view Vienna, more than 600km to the east, as a distant irrelevance. Nearer cities like Munich and Zurich exert a greater cultural influence.

Close economic ties with Switzerland and a thriving local economy have ensured that the cost of living in Vorarlberg is higher than in the rest of Austria. Visitors will find hotels slightly more **expensive** than elsewhere, and budget choices harder to come by, though there are still plenty of good-value private rooms to be found outside the main towns. Restaurants, too, are pricey, but culinary standards are so high, that it's usually well worth the extra. However, archetypal peasant dishes, such as *Kässpätzle*, a combination of cheese and pasta noodles that is very much a local staple, still feature on most restaurant menus.

Shared between Germany, Austria and Switzerland and fed by the waters of the Rhine, **Bodensee** (**Lake Constance** in English), at the northwestern edge of the province, is the main tourist draw in summer, and the lakeside town of **Bregenz** the area's touristic and cultural centre – an obvious staging post for journeys to and from southern Germany or northern Switzerland. Towns south along the **Rhine Valley** are workaday by comparison, although the medieval market town of **Feldkirch** merits a quick visit. To the west is the **Bregenzerwald**, an attractive area of rolling uplands and picturesque villages, replete with walking opportunities and a relaxing rural atmosphere. It's a world away from Austria's alpine package destinations, which include the Alberg resorts of



Zürs and **Lech** which, are covered, together with Tyrol's St Anton in Chapter 9. South of the Bregenzerwald, the town of **Bludenz** provides access to the **Montafon**, a steeply sided valley that leads to the **Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse**, a renowned alpine road snaking through lofty peaks.

Public transport in Vorarlberg is extremely well organized and inexpensive, with "maximo" day/week passes (€8.50/€18.30) covering rail and bus travel across the whole province often working out cheaper than individual tickets. Passes are purchased from train stations or from bus drivers.

Bregenz

Stretched along the eastern shores of the Bodensee, Vorarlberg's administrative capital, **BREGENZ**, combines the laid-back gentility of a lakeside resort with the vigour of a booming business and cultural centre. Despite being relatively small for a state capital, with only 25,000 inhabitants, it's an absorbing place offering a wider range of attractions, activities and night-time diversions than anywhere else in Austria west of Innsbruck. The town's artistic pedigree is ensured by the **Bregenzer Festspiele** (Bregenz Festival; late July to late Aug), an extravagant celebration of opera and orchestral music involving outdoor performances on a floating stage, which draws in an extra 200,000 visitors every summer. This sudden influx of festival-goers means that it can be exceedingly difficult to find a room here in July and August.

Bregenz gets its name from the **Brigantes**, a Celtic tribe subdued by Roman armies around 15 BC. The conquerors placated the locals by naming the settlement that grew up here "Brigantium" in their honour. Destroyed by German tribes in about 260 AD and rebuilt under Diocletian a couple of decades later, Brigantium was finally finished off by the **Alemanni**, who descended on the area in around 450 AD. In 610 the Irish missionary Columban established a monastery here, but present-day Bregenz really dates from the tenth century, when local aristocrats the Udalrichungs proclaimed themselves 'Counts of Bregenz', and built a castle on the site of the original Roman settlement. Soon after, Feldkirch replaced Bregenz as the region's strategic focal point, and the place settled back into small-town contentment until becoming Vorarlberg's capital in the twentieth century.

Local trains shuttle between Bregenz and Lindau 7km to the north, the most attractive of the German towns on the lake; there's also a lake-steamer service to Lindau, Konstanz and Friedrichshafen over the summer. Good road and rail communications with the rest of Vorarlberg ensure that the town can be used as a **base** from which to explore the Rhine Valley, as well as the nearby Bregenzerwald. Although about half of all international trains from Switzerland enter Austria at Feldkirch to the south, Bregenz has its own excellent road and rail links with Zurich and Munich.

Arrival, information and accommodation

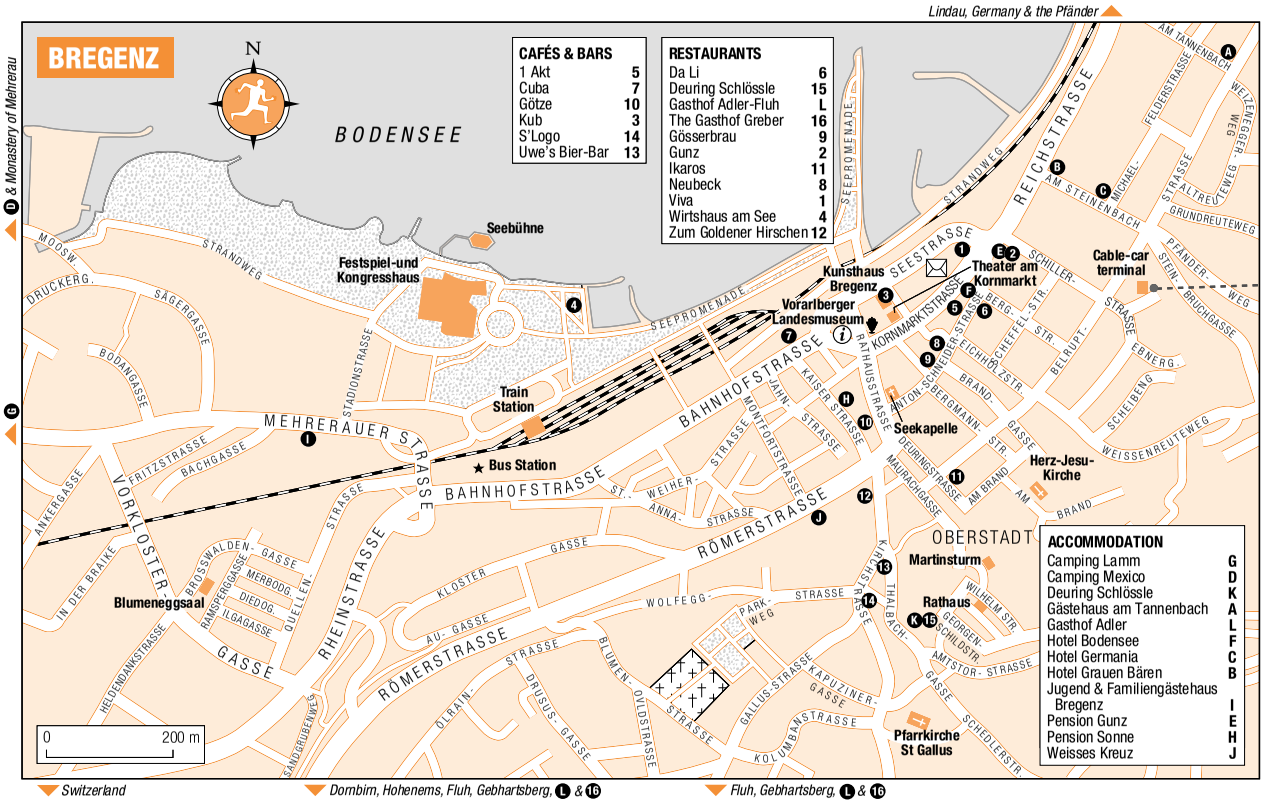
Train and **bus stations** are next to each other on the fringe of the modern town centre at the western end of the lakefront park, an easy five-minute walk from the **tourist office** at Rathausstr 35a (July–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–7pm; Oct–June Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ05574/4959–0, ⓦwww.bregenz.ws), which has a list of **private rooms** (②–⑤), and will make reservations. Note that most Bregenz hotels almost double their prices in the July/August festival season.

Hostels and camping

Camping Lamm Mehrerauerstr 51 ⓣ05574/71701, ⓦwww.gasthof-hotel-lamm.at. Small urban campground an easily walkable 1.5km west of the centre. May to mid-Oct

Camping Mexico Hechtweg 4 ⓣ05574/73260, ⓦwww.camping-mexico.at. Cheerful and excellently run small campground, close to the lake shore and 3km west of town. Has its own café and boat rental facilities. Open year round.

Jugend & Familiengästehaus Bregenz Mehrerauerstr 5 ⓣ05574/42867, ⓦwww.jfgh.at/bregenz. Excellent budget hostel just west of the train station that's worth reserving in advance. Offers beds in four- and six-person dorms year round (€19.20) as well as good en-suite singles (€25) and doubles (€36). Prices barely go up during the festival and include breakfast.



Switzerland
Dornbirn, Hohenems, Fluh, Gebhartsberg, L & 16
Fluh, Gebhartsberg, L & 16

Hotels and pensions

Deuring Schlössle Ehre-Guta-Platz 4 ⓣ05574/47800, ⓦwww.deuring-schloessle.at. Luxurious hotel housed in a former castle in the Upper Town. Atmospheric, objets-d'art-furnished rooms with all mod cons. Doubles from €210. ❾

Gasthof Adler Fluh 11 ⓣ05574/44872. Country-style inn in Fluh, a hillside hamlet 4km southwest of town. A lovely place to stay if you have your own transport. Cosy rooms with shared facilities, plus some bigger rooms with en-suite bathrooms. ❸

Hotel Bodensee Kornmarktstr 22 ⓣ05574/42300-0, ⓦwww.hotel-bodensee.at. Best of the mid-range choices, with TV and en-suite facilities in all rooms, and a good breakfast buffet. ❺

Hotel Germania Am Steinenbach 9 ⓣ05574/42766-0, ⓦwww.hotel-germania.at. An international business-standard hotel with all the creature comforts. Also pitches itself as a bicycle-friendly hotel, with a cycle repair shop on site. Houses a swish restaurant with a gourmet reputation. ❻.

Pension Gunz Anton-Schneider-Str 38 ⓣ05574/43657. Good, basic pension, bang in the city centre. Rooms come with en-suite baths, but shared toilets. No check-ins on Tues. ❹

Pension Sonne Kaiserstr 8 ⓣ05574/42572, ⓦwww.bbn.at/sonne. Simple, comfortable pension in an apartment block right in the heart of Bregenz's pedestrianized shopping district. Rooms with shared facilities ❸, or with en-suite showers ❹.

Weisses Kreuz Römerstr 5 ⓣ05574/4988-0, ⓔwwww.bestwestern-ce.com/weisseskruez. Smart hotel right in the centre of Bregenz's shopping district. Spacious rooms and all mod cons. ❼

Hotel Grauer Bär Reichstr 8 ⓣ05574/42823. On a main road and a bit noisy, but a reasonably inexpensive stand-by if other hotels are full. Most rooms are plush en-suite affairs (❺), although there are a few with shared facilities ❸.

The Town

The main focus of attention is obviously **Bodensee** itself, where a promenade and a green swath of parkland run along the shoreline, bordered to the south by the Germany-bound railway line that follows the curve of the lake. Just inland from the park is the modern town centre, or **Innenstadt**, an area of mostly nineteenth- and twentieth-century construction, which holds the bulk of Bregenz's commercial and shopping activity. A more tranquil atmosphere reigns in the **Altstadt**, or **Oberstadt**, on the hill above, where much of the older architecture is concentrated.

The lakefront

The leafy parklands and well-tended flowerbeds that line the **lakefront** are frequented by promenading visitors and locals alike, who've come to savour the impressive views towards the German side of the lake. A pleasant lake-front promenade the Strandweg, runs along much of it and it's worth hiring a bike or boat to explore (see listings on p.541).

At the western end of the park stands the **Festspiel und Kongresshaus** (ⓦwww.festspielhausbregenz.at), built in 1980 primarily to accommodate the operatic and orchestral concerts of the Bregenzer Festspiele, although cultural events and exhibitions are held here all year round. Moored outside the Kongresshaus is the **Seebühne**, or sea stage, a floating platform on which the festival's most prestigious performances are held. Seating for 6000 people is provided on the landward side.

To the eastern side of the Seebühne you'll find a small harbour area where you can rent pedaloes and motor boats by the hour (€11/19), while to the west the lakeshore path passes summer **bathing areas** and a marina before arriving, after about half an hour's walk, at the former Cistercian **monastery of Mehrerau**. Now a school, its church was rebuilt in 1962 in stark, angular style, although the wealth of vibrant Gothic altarpieces inside serve as a reminder of the monastery's heyday. The winged high altar, painted around 1500 and showing the *Crucifixion* and *Deposition*, is striking enough to make the walk here worthwhile.

The Innenstadt

Lying just inland of the main road and rail lines along the shore, Bregenz's **Innenstadt** presents an unabashedly modern face. Guarding the entrance to the town between Seestrasse and Kornmarkt is the **Kunsthaus Bregenz** (known as "KUB" for short; Tues, Wed & Fri–Sun 10–8pm, Thurs 10am–9pm; €10; Ⓦ www.kunsthaus-bregenz.at), a cube of green-hued glass by the Swiss master Peter Zumthor, completed in 1997 to provide a venue for high-profile contemporary art exhibitions. Expressly intended as a statement of the town's attachment to modern architecture, it's a coolly functional piece of work. Inside, undressed concrete walls and semi-opaque ceiling panels present an austere but effective backdrop to the exhibits on display.

Just behind the Kunsthaus, the **Vorarlberger Landesmuseum** (daily 10am–8pm; €6; Ⓦ www.vlm.at) provides an engaging survey of the province's history and folk culture. The first floor presents a fairly routine trot through Stone, Bronze and Iron ages, but things liven up by the time you get to Roman Brigantium, the first-century settlement situated to the west of the modern town centre. There's a model of the Roman town, fragments of mosaics, and a fine sandstone relief of the Romano-Celtic goddess Epona, who, as the patron of equine stock breeding, is always depicted riding a horse. The museum's second floor concentrates on **folk crafts**, with a range of wooden house interiors and a selection of Vorarlberg costumes. Worth noting here is the range of different hats on display, highlighting the fact that each region within Vorarlberg has long cultivated its own distinctive customs: women of the Grosses Walsertal swanned around in the bloated, puffball-shaped Pelzbummera, while Montafon ladies preferred the Mässli, a tall black cylinder capped by a fringe of wool. The third floor **art collection** is particularly strong on late-Gothic art plucked from the region's churches. Fifteenth-century Feldkirch painters **Moritz and Jörg Frosch** are represented with a series of Totentafeln, or memorial pictures, which usually show some deceased local bigwig kneeling in prayer below a picture of Christ or some other saintly figure, surrounded by family. Another Feldkirch luminary, **Wolf Huber**, is represented by a panel from his St Anne altar, which shows scenes from the life of Christ on the back, and St Joachim and St Anne ascending towards heaven on the front. Also on this floor is a corner devoted to local heroine **Angelika Kauffmann** (see p.543). Although her portrait of the Duke of Wellington is probably the best-known work here, her taste for big narrative themes is revealed in mythological subjects, such as the atmospheric *Death of Alcestis*.

Rathausstrasse leads south from the museum into the downtown **shopping area**, passing the **Seekapelle** at its junction with Anton-Schneider-Strasse, in whose gloomy interior lurks an impressive seventeenth-century altar. A left turn from Deuringstrasse onto Am Brand leads to the more interesting **Herz-Jesu-Kirche**, a twentieth-century neo-Gothic affair, which features some wonderfully expressive 1950s stained glass by **Martin Häusle**. His scenes from Jesus's parables run along the north side of the nave, while Old Testament stories (such as Cain slaying Abel and Noah offering a sacrifice after surviving the Flood) dot the opposite wall.

The Altstadt

Maurachgasse climbs away from the modern centre towards the **Martinstor**, once a fortified gateway to the Altstadt. Just around the corner is **Martinsturm**, a medieval tower to which a bulbous wooden dome was added around 1700, making it a town landmark ever since. Inside the tower, a small **museum**

displays armour and weaponry (May to mid-Oct Tues–Sun 9am–6.30pm; €1), and there's a chance to enjoy views down towards the lake. The medieval granaries next door were converted into a chapel in the fourteenth century, and frescoes from the period include several figures of Christ and St George. Just up the street from here stands the seventeenth-century **Rathaus** (now a residential building), an imposing half-timbered construction that looks like something out of a fairy tale.

Dominating a hillock 300m to the south, the **Pfarrkirche St Gallus** is believed to stand on the site of a chapel built by seventh-century Irish missionaries Gallus and Columba. But it's now the usual mixture of a fourteenth-century Gothic structure and Baroque add-ons, remarkable primarily for the excesses of its stuccoed ceiling, across which cherubs vie for space with abstract patterns in pastel greens and pinks. The high altar features statues of four saints: St Gallus, the one on the extreme right, is here depicted in the company of a small bear, which, according to folklore, was the saint's companion during his wanderings.

The Pfänder and the Gebhartsberg

The most popular local excursion is to the **Pfänder**, a 1062-metre-high peak just northeast of town commanding an excellent panorama of the lake. Served by a cable car from the southern end of Schillerstrasse (daily 8am–7pm €5.90 one way, €10.20 return; Ⓦwww.pfaenderbahn.at), the Pfänder can also be reached by car by taking the Lindau road and turning right at **Lochau**, the last Austrian settlement before the German frontier; though you'll need to pay €2–5 to park at the summit. At the summit is the *Berghaus Pfänder,* which offers a good selection of Austrian standards for around €8, whilst a short hike further up the hill to the television tower will lead you to two more *Gasthof*. There is also a **wildlife park** (free), where it's easy to spot deer, wild boar and Mürmeltiere (alpine marmots). The park also puts on a **falconry display** (summer daily 11am & 2.30pm; €4.80).

Several **walks** radiate outwards from the cable-car terminus, one of the most popular being the two-hour descent into Bregenz itself. Gentler is the

Exploring Bodensee

Bodensee is one of Vorarlberg's main attractions and travelling either across or around its 272km of shoreline is a good way of combining a visit to Germany and Switzerland, which border its waters. There is an excellent network of popular and relatively easy **cycling** paths ringing the lake, offering routes of between 120km and 260km, with the option to hop on a boat and cut corners at various towns along the way. Route maps with accommodation guides for the various stopping points around Bodensee are available from the tourist office in Bregenz.

The **Euregio Bodensee** card allows you to travel by public transport, right to the western tip of the lake and to the very south of Vorarlberg. The card divides the Bodensee region up into seven zones, one of which covers the whole of Vorarlberg, another Lichtenstein, while the other five cover various parts of Germany and Switzerland, and allows you free bus, train and boat travel. Two zones costs €21 per day, or €28 per day for all zones, and can be purchased at any train station.

The **Bodensee Erlebniskarte** (Ⓦwww.bodensee-erlebniskarte.info) covers roughly the same area, and its **Seebärenkarte** option allows free entrance to many of the attractions around Bodensee, including cable cars, swimming pools, and unlimited boat travel. The cards cost €69 for 3 days, €89 for 7 days, and €119 for 14 days and can be bought from most tourist offices.

southward descent to the attractive village of **Fluh** (1hr 30min), before heading west to the wooded ridge of the **Gebhartsberg** (40min), former site of the medieval fortress of **Hohenbregenz**. There's little to see of the castle nowadays, except for the pilgrimage chapel of St Gebhard, honouring the tenth-century nobleman's son thought to have been born here. Events from St Gebhard's fairly undramatic life (relinquishing his inheritance, entering the priesthood, then rising to become bishop of Constance) feature in a cycle of nineteenth-century paintings inside the church. More spectacular is the panorama of Bodensee and the Rhine Valley, and the food at *Gasthof Greber* next door to the church, which serves top-quality food at fairly expensive prices, but has good views from the terrace. Pathways descend from here to the western suburbs of Bregenz (1hr), from where you can make your own way back to the lakefront in fifteen minutes or so.

Eating, drinking and entertainment

High prices in Bregenz **restaurants** reflect both the above average local cost of living and the constant influx of well-heeled tourists, but standards here are generally outstanding, and budget choices not impossible to find. For **drinking**, you won't have to venture much beyond the modern town centre. In terms of **entertainment**, Bregenz is well served by high culture, particularly during its two major festivals (see p.535). At other times check the schedule of Festspiel und Kongresshaus for **musical events** and the Landestheater in the Theatre am Kornmarkt (Ⓦwww.landestheater.org, ⓉⓉ05574/42870-600) for classical German-language **theatre**. Bregenz tourist office can provide listings, guidance and in many instances sell tickets to many performances in town too.

Restaurants

Da Li Anton-Schneider-Str 34. Serviceable if unexciting Chinese restaurant, though the Mittagsmenü (around €7) is excellent value.

Deuring Schlössle Ehre-Guta-Platz 4 ⓉⓉ05574/47800. Inventive mix of Austrian and international cuisine in what is one of the country's leading restaurants, with main courses exceeding €25. Reserve in advance.

Gasthof Adler-Fluh Fluh 11 ⓉⓉ05574/44872. Popular out-of-town restaurant in the chic village suburb of Fluh, offering expertly prepared variations on basic Vorarlberg cuisine; it's particularly strong on deer, or *Reh*, in its many forms. Nice outdoor terrace. It's easy to get to if you have your own transport – head out of town along Römerstr; otherwise you'll have to take a taxi.

Zum Goldenen Hirschen Kirchstr 8. An atmospheric old inn with chunky wooden furnishings, a jovial, pub-like atmosphere and stolid Austrian fare. A nice place for a drink, too. Closed Tues.

Gösserbrau Anton-Schneider-Str 1. Enduringly popular venue with something of a split personality. You can taste standard local fare – look out for Bregenzerwald cheeses and whitefish from Lake Constance – in the tastefully wood-panelled rooms of the main restaurant, or sup beers and munch snacks in the adjoining *rap-sak* bar, which, in contrast, looks like the set of a sixties' sci-fi film. Daily until 2am.

Gunz Anton-Schneider-Str 38. Probably the cheapest source of traditional Austrian food in town, with main courses (such as *Vorarlberger Kässpätzle*, a local variation on the noodles and cheese sauce combination) from €4, and lunch menus from €5.

Ikaros Deuringstr 5. Greek restaurant with a convenient central location, informal café feel, and cheap lunchtime specials.

Neubeck Anton-Schneider-Str 5. Smartish bar with a dignified fin-de-siècle interior and an extensive wine list. Serves gourmet food. Closed Sun & Mon.

Viva Seestr 7. Excellent and popular – if slightly pricey – Mexican restaurant with the expected range of central American eats. The bar at the rear attracts a youngish crowd with its wide range of cocktails, Austrian ales and bottled Mexican beers.

Wirtshaus am See Seepromenade 22. Moderately expensive Austrian and regional cuisine in a half-timbered lakeside pavilion which used to serve as the club house for local yachtsmen; large and popular beer garden outside.

Cafés and bars

Cuba Bahnhofstr9. Two-storey café-bar built around an enormous chandelier, which serves as

The Bregenz's Festspiele and Frühling

Since their inception in 1946 the **Bregenzer Festspiele** (Bregenz Festival; ⓦwww.bregenzerfestspiele.com) has offered a top-notch programme of opera, orchestral concerts and theatre between late July and late August. These famously involve dramatic outdoor performances on the Seebühne – a stage which floats on Lake Constance – where more populist choices are performed (past offerings have included *West Side Story*, *Porgy and Bess* and *La Bohème*) – while more challenging pieces grace smaller indoor auditoriums. For tickets you should contact the festival office via the website as early as possible; performances are often sold out nine months in advance. Bregenz's other annual high-culture shindig, the **Bregenzer Frühling**, between late March and late April, runs a distant second in terms of popularity, but still features top-notch ballet and orchestral performances. These performances can be booked via the Bregenz tourist office (see p.535) and at ⓦwww.v-ticket.at.

town-centre coffee house during the day, raucous latin bar (with resident DJ) at night. Daily until 4am.
Götze Kaiserstr 9. Traditional coffee house with huge range of gateaux and a fine line in home-made pralines. Closed Sun.
Kub Karl Tizian-Platz 1 Minimalist modern bar in the Kunsthaus with a good range of breakfasts, then salads and light lunches before the style set moves in for cocktails until 1.30am.
Paschanga Kornmarktstr 24. Popular cocktail bar with an upbeat, hedonistic vibe, open until 4am on weekend nights. Closed Mon & Tues.
S'Logo Kirchstr 47. Roomy, minimalist bar with Internet access midway between the Innenstadt and the Pfarrkirche St Gallus. Live bands at weekends.
Uwe's Bier-Bar Kirchstr 2. Cosy, popular bar favoured by Bregenz's younger set. Open daily from 7pm.

Listings

Bike rental Fahrrad-Verleih am See ⓣ05574/54130. Right by the water's edge, near the Kub. Operates May–Oct.
Boat rental Camping Mexico (ⓦwww.camping-mexico.at) rents canoes for up to four people, by the hour or from €25 for the day.
Car rental Hertz, Fritz-Mayer-Platz ⓣ05574/93000-370.
Consulates UK, 2km south of the centre at Bundesstr 110, Lauterach ⓣ05574/696207. Other nationals should contact their embassy in Vienna.
Hospital Landeskrankenhaus, C-Pedenz-Str 2 ⓣ05574/401-0.
Internet Café Cockpit, Bahnhofstr 10, ⓦwww.cockpit-cafe.com. Mon–Fri 8am–8pm, Sat 8am–6pm.
Police Bahnhofstr 51 ⓣ05574/42023.
Post office Seestr 5. Mon–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat 8am–noon.

The Bregenzerwald

Although popular with Austrian, Swiss and German trippers, the rural charms of the **Bregenzerwald** remain relatively unknown to the rest of Europe. Far from being the forest that the name suggests, the region is a dense patchwork of dairy-farming villages spread across an undulating landscape of subalpine pasture. Although the villages of the Bregenzerwald are not nearly as developed as the higher-altitude resorts further east, the hills are big enough to provide good beginner and intermediate-level **alpine skiing**, a wealth of cross-country skiing and, in summer, glorious hiking opportunities.

Known for its mildly tangy local *Bergkäse*, or "highland cheese", the Bregenzerwald is also famous for its architecture; here more than anywhere else in Austria, traditional wooden farmhouses are still in use, and their age-old building techniques continue to inform modern construction. Using wood

Bregenzerwald passes

In winter, **day passes** for skiers covering gondolas and chairlifts at a single Bregenzerwald resort usually weigh in at €20–30. However, for longer periods it's best to invest in the **3 Valley Superpass** (Ⓦwww.3taeler.at) which covers the whole of the Bregenzerwald, as well as the neighbouring Grosses Walsertal and the Lechtal (although not the resort of Lech itself) – a whopping total of 138 chairlifts and 339km of pistes. Passes include use of ski buses between resorts and are available in daily increments from lift stations, sample prices being €93 for 3 days; €160 for 6 days; and €276 for 13 days. In summer, claim a free **Bregenzerwald card** by presenting your accommodation guest card (if valid for three nights or more) at any tourist information centre. It covers all the lifts in the region, as well as local buses, swimming pools and some museums.

from local spruce trees, the typical Bregenzerwald house joins living quarters and animal stalls under a single, shallow roof. Often adorned with intricately carved eaves and balconies, they're almost always shingled – clad in tiny wooden scales that offer the best protection against the bitter winter weather.

The main centres are the rather humdrum **Egg**, and the more attractive **Bezau** and **Au**, all linked by a main road that heads southeast from Dornbirn towards Warth. The most characteristic Bregenzerwald villages, **Schwarzenberg** and **Damüls**, are only a few kilometres off this road. It's ideal for touring by car or bike, although the local bus network is quite extensive with hourly buses from Bregenz plying the main road, and connecting services ensuring that you're never really cut off. Less frequent buses also connect Damüls with Bludenz.

Egg

Entering the region from Bregenz or Dornbirn along the L200, the first settlement of any size is **EGG** (pronounced "Eck"), a pleasant enough village, even if it lacks the character of the places beyond. Egg **tourist office**, on the opposite side of the square from the bus stop (Ⓣ05512/2426, Ⓦwww.tiscover.at/egg), has advice on local rooms (1) should you want to stay; although potentially more useful is the Bregenzerwald **regional tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–5pm; call centre open at weekends Ⓣ05512/2365, Ⓦwww.bregenzerwald.at), just up the hill from here, at the modern Impulszentrum, which has extensive information about all accommodation options in the Bregenzerwald region and a database of vacancies, as well as a host of maps and other information. If you're stopping off in Egg for a bite **to eat** then consider the *Kässtadl* on the main street, a traditional restaurant specializing in Bregenzerwald cheese-based dishes, such as *Kässpatzle*, fondue and raclette.

Schwarzenberg

Ranged across grassy hillocks and surrounded by pine-clad slopes, **SCHWARZENBERG** represents the Bregenzerwald at its most idyllic, with many of the most important examples of the region's traditional architecture found here. It was home to artist **Angelika Kauffmann** (see box opposite), who is remembered in a worthwhile local museum. It's also the site of two of Vorarlberg's best **restaurants**, enhancing the village's popularity amongst day-trippers from the urban centres of the Rhine Valley. Extra numbers pour into Schwarzenberg for the **Schubertiade** (Ⓣ05576/72091, Ⓦwww.schubertiade.at), a festival of Schubert-penned songs performed by top international names

in the purpose-built Angelika-Kauffmann-Saal, a timber-framed concert hall on the fringes of the village. The festival is usually divided into two seasons of concerts, the first in June, the second in late August–early September. An altogether more rustic slice of culture is served up at the **Alpabtrieb** in mid-September when the cows come down from the higher pastures for the winter, which has become an excuse for a major knees-up, with folk music, cheese competitions and a big farm-produce market.

Focal point of Schwarzenberg is the **Dreifaltigkeitskirche**, supposedly built over the grave of Ilga, a twelfth-century saint; her bones are concealed in a small Rococo casket inside the church on the left. The 16-year-old Angelika Kauffmann painted the medallions of the apostles adorning the nave, and she later donated the Madonna that hangs above the main altar. The pictures of the Stations of the Cross are by her father, Johann Josef. The Kauffmann heritage can be explored further in the **Angelika-Kauffmann-Museum** (May–Oct Tues & Sat 10–5pm, Thurs 10am–8pm; €6), in a characteristic Bregenzerwald house just up the hill from the church. The room devoted to Angelika is short on original artworks, but the prints and books on display here provide an adequate summary of her life. The rest of the museum's collection is mostly ethnographic and is strong on local costumes, especially the bizarre range of women's headgear occasionally still worn on feast days. Further rooms contain

Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807)

Born in the Swiss town of **Chur** to a family from **Schwarzenberg**, and subsequently resident in both England and Italy, **Angelika Kauffmann** has always been a cultural heroine to more than one nation. She picked up the rudiments of painting from her father Johann Josef Kauffmann, a jobbing artist from the Bregenzerwald who worked throughout Switzerland and northern Italy during Angelika's childhood. The family came home to Schwarzenberg briefly in 1757, where father and daughter worked together on the decoration of the village church, thereby giving present-day local tourist authorities sufficient reason to claim her as their own.

When the family returned to Italy, Angelika studied in Florence and Rome, and achieved some local notoriety before becoming the protégée of Lady Wentworth, the wife of the British ambassador in Venice, who took her to London in 1763. Once introduced to London society, Kauffmann went down a storm: the elements of Neoclassicism that she had picked up in Italy were very much in vogue. She certainly knew the demands of the local market, producing large, often sentimental narrative paintings of mythological and historical subjects for wealthy collectors, and dashing off appealing portraits of her high-born circle of friends.

Her private life was the cause of much society gossip, although it's fair to assume that some was malicious. She almost certainly had affairs with English painters Nathaniel Dance and Joshua Reynolds, the Swiss painter Fuseli, and French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat, before a disastrous marriage with a gold-digging charmer posing as the Swedish Count de Horn (sic). When he was unmasked as an impostor and bigamist, Kauffmann had to pay out the then exorbitant sum of £300 to persuade him to leave town. He died soon afterwards, leaving Kauffmann free to marry the Venetian painter Antonio Zucchi in 1781, subsequently going to live with him in Rome, where she died.

A founder member of the British Royal Academy of Art, Kauffmann's greatest achievement was to win respect as a female artist working in the male-dominated world of narrative painting. Although much of her work is in private hands, reasonable collections can be found in the Vorarlberger Landesmuseum in Bregenz (see p.538), as well as the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery in England and the Kunstmuseum in Chur.

all manner of agricultural tools and domestic trinkets, of which the most curious are surely the *Flaschenaltäre*, or "bottle altars", which work on the same principle as a ship in a bottle, but feature tiny dolls of saints.

Practicalities

Buses stop at the crossroads by the church, 100m south of the village hall where the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon; ⓣ05512/3570, ⓦwww.schwarzenberg.at) has a list of **hotels** and **private rooms** (2). Apartments and private rooms are the cheapest option here, whilst at the other end of the scale, *Gasthof Hirschen* (ⓣ05512/2944, ⓦwww.hirschenschwarzenberg.at; 8), immediately next to the crossroads, is the most upmarket choice in the village; a wonderfully restored old inn offering both modern and traditional rooms, and providing a wealth of creature comforts besides. Their highly regarded restaurant has a wood-panelled interior and offers both local and internationally inspired seasonal menus with main courses starting at around €15. Similar gourmet fare is also served to prosperous out-of-towners next door at the *Adler*. An inexpensive **place to eat** is *Buche* about 200m south from the central crossroads on the Bezau road, which offers standard Austrian veal-and-pork cuisine alongside some cheesy Vorarlberg alternatives; their Tagesmenüs hover around the €8.50 mark. The *Rumpelkeller* in the basement of the *Gasthof Hirschen* is a cosy **bar** catering for the village's younger set.

Bezau

Hourly buses leave Schwarzenberg onwards to **BEZAU**, the next settlement of any size, 7km to the south. The unofficial capital of the Bregenzerwald, Bezau is full of the area's famed shingle-clad houses and a convenient starting point for numerous local walks.

The best way to begin exploring the highland pastures is to take the **gondola** (May-Oct & mid-Dec to mid-April daily 9am–5pm; one way €9.40, return €12.80; ⓦwww.bergbahnen-bezau.at) from the eastern end of the village to the middle station, **Berghaus Sonderach**, or onwards to the terminus at **Baumgartenhöhe**, a ridge just below the 1711-metre-high Niedere Alpe. From either point, pathways offering panoramic views lead back down to the village. In winter 20km of family-friendly ski runs are accessible from the top of the gondola.

For a different view of the area, the Wälderbähnle **steam train** (late May to early Oct, 3 daily departures; €5.50 one way, €7.50 return, ⓦwww.waelderbaehnle.at) plies part of the railway track that, until 20 years ago, linked Bezau to Bregenz. The line stops near Schwarzenberg (see p.542), from where you can wander back to Bezau along well signposted paths (1.5hrs). You'll find the station behind the main bus stop, just past Kaffee-Konditorei *Fröwis*.

The **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1.30–5.30pm; ⓣ05514/2295, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/bezau) next to the post office (where **buses** also stop) will direct you to **private rooms** (2) or holiday **apartments**. *Gasthof Hirschen* (ⓣ05514/2382, ⓦwww.hirschen-bezau.at; 3), just opposite the tourist office has cosy pine-clad en-suite rooms, whilst *Hotel Gams* (ⓣ05514/2220, ⓦwww.hotel-gams.at; 5) around the corner offers tennis courts, outdoor pool and sauna. There's a riverside **campsite** (May–Sept) at the western end of the village, just off the main road. You'll find plenty of *Gasthöfe* in town offering standard Austrian **food**. For something slightly different, the central *Café-Konditorei Fröwis* has a pizzeria attached; and the *Gams* (see above) is well-known for good traditional Vorarlberg food – although, with mains starting around €15, it's relatively pricey.

Mellau

From Bezau the main Bregenz–Warth road follows the valley of the **Bregenzer Ache** through increasingly mountainous terrain, passing a succession of pleasant villages. **MELLAU**, squatting beneath the rugged northwestern flanks of the 2044m **Kanisfluh** 3km outside of Bezau is one of them, and is an excellent base for walking. A **gondola** at the southern end of the village (mid-June to mid-Oct & mid-Dec to mid-April Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1–5pm, Sun 9am–5pm; €6.80 one way, €9.40 return) ascends to the Rossstelle, the 1400-metre-high ridge that looms above the village to the south, and the site of a small skiing area in winter. From here you can walk back down to the village in just under two hours, or take one of the trails that leads off across the highland pastures. For the more ambitious, a twelve-kilometre hike (one that shouldn't be attempted without a detailed map) leads southwards to the 1882-metre **Bettler Kulm** before skirting the side of the 2095-metre **Damülser Mittagspitze** and descending to the village of Damüls (see p.546) after a total of five or six hours.

There are a number of hotels, and most of the householders in the village offer **rooms** or **apartments** to rent. You'll find an accommodation information board and courtesy phone in the centre of the village, where **buses** stop, and the **tourist office** in the Gemeindeamt by the church (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 8am–noon; ⓣ05518/2203, ⓦwww.mellau.at) will also help, as well as providing walking maps and skiing information.

Au, Schoppernau and beyond

Nine kilometres beyond Mellau, the village of **AU** was the site of an important guild of craftsmen and builders in the eighteenth century. Relying on the indigenous aptitude for house building as a way out of rural poverty, the craftsmen of Au plied their trade throughout southern Germany, with some of them – like Michael Beer, architect of the monastery at Kempten in Bavaria – attaining considerable fame. Aside from the usual roundup of photogenic farmhouses, there's little of their legacy in Au today, although this prosperous dairy village and the adjoining settlement of **SCHOPPERNAU** to the west are undeniably attractive. The twin villages are impressively framed by mountain scenery, with the smoothly conical Üntschenspitze rising to the east, and the ubiquitous form of Kanisfluh to the west.

Midway between Au and Schoppernau, a **gondola** (daily: mid-June to mid-Oct & mid-Dec to mid-April), ascends to the *Panorama* restaurant just below the 2090-metre summit of the **Diedamskopf**, centre of a smallish, beginner-orientated ski area in winter (seven lifts serving 44km of runs), and a dense network of summer hiking trails. A brochure detailing walking routes – from fifteen-minute jaunts to eight-hour expeditions – can be obtained from the **tourist office** in the centre of Au (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1.30–5.30pm, Sat 8am–noon; ⓣ05515/2288, ⓦwww.au-schoppernau.at), outside which local buses stop. The tourist office will also direct you to the area's plentiful **private rooms** (❷) and **apartments** – many in characterful timber farmhouses. Most of the **hotels** are in Au: *Hotel Rössle* (ⓣ05515/2216, ⓦwww.roessle-au.at; ❹), beside the tourist office, is an archetypal Bregenzerwald house, offering en-suite rooms with TV and a sauna. There's also a **campsite**, *Köb*, Au-Neudorf 356 (ⓣ05515/2331), near the gondola terminal. Most of the *Gasthöfe* in the two villages serve **food**: the *Alte Post* in Au's centre has traditional Vorarlberg dishes with main courses from €8.50.

The Hochtannberg Pass and around

Beyond Schoppernau the main road clambers towards the **Hochtannberg Pass** some 10km beyond, through an area settled by immigrants from the Swiss canton of Valais in the fourteenth century. Villages like **SCHRÖCKEN** still bear the imprint of Valaisian architecture, preserving several sturdy wooden houses with painted window frames. Sometimes closed in winter due to risk of avalanche, the road that climbs above Schröcken negotiates a couple of hairpin bends before reaching the 1676-metre summit of the **Hochtannberg**, and descending towards the sleepy market town of **WARTH**, in the northern foothills of the Arlberg. From here, one road leads east down the Lech Valley into Tyrol to the market town of Reutte (see p.516) 60km away, another (April–Nov) climbs south, providing summer access to Lech and Zürs (see p.529), some 10 and 15km to the south respectively.

Damüls and around

A minor road heads west from Au towards **DAMÜLS**, an exceedingly pretty spot on a shelf just above the Krumbach Valley. The village-centre **Pfarrkirche** boasts a series of Gothic frescoes dating from 1484, vividly evoking late-medieval piety with a lurid *Last Judgement* over the chancel arch. On the left-hand side of the nave are twenty scenes covering Christ's last days, from the entry into Jerusalem to the Crucifixion.

Damüls' proximity to higher altitudes makes it a major centre for **skiing**, with several chairlifts offering immediate access to the slopes. It doesn't feature in any of the winter package-holiday brochures, however, and is much more low-key than the Arlberg resorts further east. Nevertheless, if you're prepared to travel here independently, it's a good place for beginners and families, offering 64km of good intermediate-level pistes.

In summer, **walkers** can take the **chairlift** (mid-June to mid-Oct daily 9am–4.30pm; €7 one-way, €9 return) from the valley bottom just north of the village up to **Uga**, a saddle between the peaks of **Eisenkopf** and **Mittagspitze**. The walk back to Damüls takes about two hours. A more strenuous alternative is to head westwards beneath the Mittagspitze towards the 2051-metre-high **Ragazerblanken**, before turning south towards **Sunsersee**, flanking the 2010-metre **Portlerhorn**, and descending back to the village. Providing access to some excellent views along the way, this circuit takes five to six hours.

The main road through Damüls continues by way of a tunnel to **FASCHINA**, 3km to the southeast (also accessible by a gently ascending footpath from Damüls), a mountain hamlet popular with skiers and walkers. There's a **chairlift** to the 1777-metre **Hahnenkopf**, which looks over Faschina to the west; the summit is a good starting point for walks back to Faschina or Damüls.

Practicalities

Most houses in Damüls let out **rooms** (❶–❷), although many establishments, even larger hotels, are closed in May and November: the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 1.30–6pm; Dec–April also Sat 10am–noon; ⓣ05510/6200, ⓦwww.damuels.at) in the village centre, a fifteen-minute walk uphill from the Uga chairlift, has details. Several **pensions** crowd the chairlift terminal: traditional *Haus Bickel*, Uga 82 (ⓣ05510/279, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/bickel.damuels; summer ❶, winter ❷), is cheap and atmospheric; *Pension Johanna*, Uga 79 (ⓣ05510/286, ⓦwww.tiscover.at/johanna.damuels; summer ❷; winter ❸), has good modern en suites; while nearby *Hotel Alpenblume*, Uga 78 (ⓣ05510/265, ⓦwww.tiscover.com/alpenblume; summer ❸, winter ❼),

is a large, chalet-style place with a TV in every room. Top of the range is the *Damülser Hof*, Oberdamüls 147 (T05510/210, Wwww.damuelserhof.at; summer 8, winter 9), a chalet complex with indoor swimming pools and a range of traditionally decorated rooms. For **eating**, a couple of *Gasthöfe* around the Uga chairlift offer moderately priced food, while the *S'Scharfen Eck* is a cosy **bar** located underneath the *Hotel Walliser Stube*, Uga 75.

The Rhine Valley

The Rhine marks the frontier between Austria and Switzerland for 35km, before emptying into Bodensee just west of Bregenz. The settlements on the Austrian side of the valley form a chain of prosperous, semi-industrialized communities broken up by rich, verdant farmland. **Feldkirch**, with its well-preserved medieval centre, is the most worthwhile town to visit, though the others possess enough interest to merit a brief look. The main road and rail route from Bregenz links all these towns before wheeling eastwards towards the Arlberg Pass, ensuring that several of them could easily be visited from Bregenz as a day-trip.

Dornbirn

Twelve kilometres south of Bregenz lies the largely modern town of **DORNBIRN**, a textile manufacturing centre from which Vorarlberg gained much of its nineteenth-century wealth. It's an important shopping destination for Rhine valley locals, but has little of tourist appeal save for the **Rappenlochschlucht** or Rappenloch Gorge 4km southeast of the centre, where the waters of the **Dornbirner Ache** rush down from the heights of the Bregenzerwald. An impressive series of cataracts and narrow defiles accessible by a wooden walkway, it can be reached via the frequent municipal bus #5 from Dornbirn's Rathausplatz to its Gütlestrasse terminus – this involves a two-kilometre walk along the gorge.

Hohenems

Seven kilometres south of Dornbirn, the small town of **HOHENEMS** sits decoratively beneath the sheer cliffs of the **Schlossberg**, site of the Ems family's ruined stronghold. Important figures to the town's destiny since the thirteenth century, the Ems brood were extraordinarily well connected in sixteenth-century Catholic circles – Wolf Dietrich von Ems was a brother-in-law of the pope – and it was as prince-archbishop of Salzburg that Wolf Dietrich's son Marcus Sitticus von Ems began building the Renaissance **Schloss Hohenems**, which now dominates the town's main square, the Schlossplatz, and is now used for exhibitions, antique fairs and classical recitals. Marcus's brother Hannibal ordered the construction of the **Pfarrkirche** next door in 1581, and a statue of the benefactor, standing in a niche, is the centrepiece of its fine Renaissance facade. Inside, Hannibal's son Kaspar von Ems is buried in a large marble sarcophagus, his effigy reclining nonchalantly on the coffin lid. Highlight of the interior is the altarpiece of pale wood which stands nearby Hannibal's grave, and which sports a series of exquisitely carved tableaux: there's a *Coronation of the Virgin* in the middle, with scenes of the Nativity, Annunciation and Crucifixion stacked above it in the manner of a four-storey puppet theatre. Most of the figures were carved by a local village artisan in around 1530, although several saintly statuettes were placed on either side of the Coronation a century later.

Marktstrasse heads north from the church towards Schweizer Strasse, where a **Jüdisches Museum** (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm, ⓦwww.jm-hohenems.at; €7), at no. 5, documents the history of the Jews who settled here after Kaspar von Ems issued the Jewish population with a Charter of Protection in 1617, making the town a relatively safe haven – although occasional pogroms were not unknown locally. Numbers fell dramatically after 1860, when Jews were allowed to settle anywhere in the Habsburg empire, although the local Jewish community continued to exert a strong influence on Hohenems life. One prominent local family, the Rosenthals, ran the town cotton mill, and it's in their rather sumptuous villa that the museum is housed, still with its original furniture and restored ceiling paintings. A wealth of photographs – notably pictures of sporting and cultural organizations in which Jews and Gentiles took part together – reveal the atmosphere of interdependence and tolerance that prevailed here. The museum also hosts a series of exhibitions on contemporary Jewish life, and acts as a meeting place for people interested in learning more about Jewish history.

Practicalities

The **train station** is an easy five-minute walk west of the Schlossplatz: from the station, turn left along Angelika-Kauffmann-Strasse and right into Graf-Maximilian-Strasse to get to the square. From Schlossplatz, a short walk north past the Jewish Museum and along Schweizer Strasse leads to the **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 9am–noon & 1.30–6pm; ⓣ05576/42780, ⓦwww.hohenems.at). They have free local maps and can book you one of the small number of **private rooms** (❷) in town. *Gasthof Hirschen*, on the street parallel to the tourist information at Marktstr 56 (ⓣ05576/72345, ⓔgasthof.hirschen@aon.at; ❷), is a reasonable central **hotel** offering modern rooms with en-suite facilities and TV; *Café-Pension Lorenz*, Bahnhofstr 17 (ⓣ05576/72332; ❹), is the best of the mid-range places to stay, as well as being an excellent café. Most other **eating and drinking** venues are on or around Schlossplatz. *Schlosskaffee*, Schlossplatz 10, offers a comfortable setting in which to enjoy a daytime coffee or snack, whilst *im Palast*, occupying one side of Schloss Hohenems, is a popular restaurant offering the usual Austrian fare, with a few vegetarian options thrown in, and has a bar with a large outdoor terrace. *Verrückt*, just beyond the Jewish museum at Schweizer Str 25, is the town's only lively drinking venue, open daily until 3am.

Rankweil

Very much a one-horse town, **RANKWEIL** is primarily known for the **Liebfrauenkirche** (daily: April–Sept till 8pm; Oct–March till 6pm), a pilgrimage church that surveys the town from a central crag. Miraculous healing properties are attributed to its thirteenth-century cross, which hangs above the main altar. Bearing a tender relief of the crucified Christ, the wooden cross was silver-plated in the eighteenth century to add lustre. Pilgrims are also drawn to the Baroque altar to the Virgin Mary on the left-hand side, which has a Gothic Madonna and Child as its centrepiece. A wooden parapet runs around the outside of the church, offering an excellent panorama of the Rhine Valley and the Swiss Alps.

A five-minute train journey, or ten-minute bus ride from Feldkirch, Rankweil's **train station** is on the western fringes of the centre, a short walk up Bahnhofstrasse from the town's main thoroughfare, Ringstrasse, from where several fairly obvious pathways lead up to the church.

Feldkirch

Though several international trains enter Austria at **FELDKIRCH**, most travellers speed east to Innsbruck and beyond without a second glance at this charming medieval market town. Certainly tourist attractions of any real drama are thin on the ground, but the gathering of late-Gothic town houses give the largely pedestrianized town centre atmosphere and make it a pleasant place to amble. The centre focuses on two parallel arcaded market squares, **Neustadt** and **Marktgasse**, bounded to the south and west by a succession of medieval towers and gates; reminders of the original town fortifications that were last strengthened at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Emperor Maximilian I. Most impressive of these are the **Churertor**, an ornate fourteenth-century gateway guarding the southwesterly route to Chur, and the elegant, spindly **Katzenturm**, named after the lions' heads that once adorned the cannon housed here. The main attraction in the Gothic **Domkirche St Nikolaus** on the northwestern side of the centre is Wolf Huber's **Pietà** (to the right of the high altar), painted in 1521, the vestige of a much larger altar-piece honouring St Anne (another portion of which is in the Landesmuseum in Bregenz). A native of Feldkirch who spent most of his working life in the Bavarian town of Passau, Huber introduced a new sensitivity towards landscape into the religious painting of the time, visible here in the craggy hills – obviously inspired by the Rhine valley – that form the background to the scene. The church's other undoubted highlight is its stained-glass windows, completed in 1962 by local artist Martin Häusle. Abstract fields of kaleidoscopic colour blend easily with lively renditions of various saints, including a red-robed St Nicholas, patron of the church, above the high altar.

Schlossgraben leads east from the church towards **Schattenburg**, a hilltop fortification for the counts of Montfort between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, although its current appearance owes much to its sixteenth-century role as courtly residence of the imperial governors of Vorarlberg. Inside, the **Heimatmuseum** (March–Oct Sun–Tues 9am–noon & 1–5pm; €2.50) houses an uninspiring collection of peasant crafts and furnishings.

Practicalities

Feldkirch's **train station** is a ten-minute walk north of the centre. Turn left out of the station forecourt and head down Bahnhofstrasse to reach the **tourist office**, just behind the Katzenturm at Schlossergasse 8 (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 1.30–5.30pm, Sat 9am–noon; ⓣ05522/73467, ⓦwww.feldkirch.at). The tourist office will book **private rooms** (②), although most are in far-flung residential suburbs. Feldkirch's **youth hostel**, Reichsstr 111 (ⓣ05522/73181; Jan–Oct; buses #2, #59, #60, #68 from the station) is also a little way out, 1km north of the train station but in a lovely half-timbered former medieval hospital. Available are modern dorms, singles and doubles (②). Central hotels include *Lingg*, Kreuzgasse 10 (ⓣ05522/72062; ④), a nice old inn overlooking the Marktgasse, although it has few rooms; and *Alpenrose*, Rosengasse 4–6 (ⓣ05522/72175, ⓦwww.hotel-alpenrose.net; ⑦), a 500-year-old town house in the centre, with antique furnishings.

There's a reasonable sprinkling of **places to eat** in the town centre. Feldkirch's leading coffee-and-pastries venue is the rather swish *Café Zanona*, just off Marktgasse at Montfortgasse 3, which attracts a mixture of elderly matrons and young trendies. There's no problem finding Austrian staples and good pizzas in the Altstadt **restaurants**, but a short walk south along Neustadt brings you to the *Rösslepark*, a brewpub with plenty of different local beers, good weekly specials and often live music later in the day. Above, both literally and in price,

is the *Schlosswirtschaft*, Burggasse 1, inside Schloss Schattenburg, an atmospheric place to enjoy local specialities in timber-beamed rooms. For a night on the town consider the hip *Rauch Club*, Markstr 9, a café, restaurant and lively **nightclub** favouring electronica and funk, or its sister venue, *Sonderbar*, underneath Hotel Baren at Bahnhofstr 1, with its wackier mix of tunes and less serious crowd.

The Montafon

A narrow valley dotted with picturesque villages and presided over by the imperious Rätikon and Silvretta ranges, the **MONTAFON** is one of Vorarlberg's most dramatic landscapes. Its workaday gateway town, **Bludenz**, at the entrance to the valley – on both the main-line railway and E60 motorway – is barely worth a look, but it's here that the half-hourly **trains** of the narrow-gauge Montafonerbahn railway start. The best base in the Montafon is probably **Schruns,** 15km from Bludenz, where a winter sports scene thrives, though the

Montafon activities and passes

The Montafon (ⓦwww.montafon.at) is liveliest in **winter** when, between November and April, the **skiing areas** around Schruns draw beginner and intermediate skiers in particular. A ski pass covering all 62 lifts and 222km of pistes in the valley can be bought in daily increments, and comes to €100 for 3 days, €175.50 for 6 days, €308.50 for 13 days. Multi-day passes are also offered in which skiing days don't have to run consecutively. Other winter activities possible in the area include cross-county skiing and snowshoeing on 100km of marked trails, tobogganing on several runs, as well as sleigh rides and ice skating.

The key **summer** activity in the Montafon is **hiking**, with 500km of trails on hand and many accessible by cable cars and a hikers' shuttle bus (not covered by the Montafon-Silvretta card – see below). Local tourist information branches produce a leaflet detailing what is available, but some of the best walks are up Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse, detailed in the box on pp.552–553.

A good portion of the Montafon's hiking trails are also open to **cyclists** who have a choice of 860km of trails in the valley. An easy option is the **cycle path** that goes up the valley from Bludenz, starting on the north side of its train station (where you can rent bicycles). But if you have the energy don't miss the chance to pedal a 33km **loop** that uses portions of the Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse to get from Partenen to Galtür (see p.525), before returning via the motor-traffic-free Kopserstrasse. The loop is particularly attractive since you can pop your bike on the Vermuntbahn cable car (July–Sept daily 8.30–noon, 1–4.30pm; €9.20 inc bike) in Partenen to save yourself around 700m of climbing to make the loop manageable in about three hours. Quality mountain bikes can be hired from the Alpenbad-Montafon, but in truth much of the best mountain biking in the area is in the neighbouring Paznaun valley (see p.524).

Other summer activities well-catered for in the valley include golf, horse riding, fishing, paragliding, rock-climbing and tennis and reductions on many of these are offered to those in possession of a **Montafon-Silvretta Card. This summer pass** is available to all those overnighting in the Montafon – you'll need to show your accommodation receipt-and principally entitles you to free buses and cable cars use in both the Montafon and Paznaun valleys; rail travel between Schruns and Bludenz and up to St Anton (see p.526); and free entry to public swimming pools and the few museums. The passes – which are valid for 3, 5, 7, 10 or 14 days – are sold at all the region's cable car and gondola terminals; 3 days cost €32.50, 14 days €71.

rest of the year things are pretty quiet despite the area's popularity with **hikers**. Just about every other **outdoor activity** is possible (see box opposite), though many visitors simply pass on the drive over the magnificent **Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse** – the road at the head of the valley that climbs above the tree-line to wind through a bleak and beautiful high-alpine landscape before dropping into Tyrol's Paznaun valley (see p.524).

Bludenz

Regional transport hub **BLUDENZ**'s only real claim to fame is the Suchard chocolate factory across the road from the train station, and the Milka Chocolate Festival in the second week of July which provides an entertaining day out for kids. Otherwise the town's paltry collection of sights boil down to the sixteenth-century **Pfarrkirche St Lorenz**, located on a height at the northern end of the town centre and remarkable only for its stately octagonal tower, and the adjacent **Oberer Tor,** a former city gate that now houses the town **museum** (June–Sept Mon–Sat 3–5pm; €1.50), a modest collection of craft implements. Beyond the gate, rows of seventeenth-century town houses with street-level arcading add character to the main shopping area. One kilometre north of the centre, a **cable car** (May–Oct 9am–6pm; €10.40 return) ascends to the 1384-metre **Muttersberg** for excellent views south to the Rätikon and Silvretta mountain ranges. Also outside the centre, an easy ten-minute walk northeast of the Altstadt is Val Blu (Mon 11am–9pm, Tues 1–9pm, Wed–Sun 9am–9pm; €10.20; Ⓦwww.valblu.at) a first-rate spa, swimming pool and sauna complex.

The **train** station is a five-minute walk south of the main street, Mutterstrasse, which the **tourist office** is just off, at Werdenbergerstr 42 (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–5.30pm, Ⓣ05552/62170, Ⓦwww.bludenz.at). They can help you book **private rooms** (1) in town, but best central **hotel** is the four-star *Schlosshotel Dörflinger*, Schlossplatz 5 (Ⓣ05552/63016, Ⓦwww.schlosshotel.cc; 7), on a hilltop behind the Pfarrkirche, which has a pleasant **restaurant** where excellent local dishes cost around €15.

Schruns

Pressed hard against the flanks of the **Hochjoch**, which rises to the southeast, **SCHRUNS,** 12km up the valley from Bludenz, clusters around a main square dominated by the **Pfarrkirche St Jodok**, whose elegant onion spire is more interesting than its late-nineteenth-century interior. Standing opposite the church, the **Heimatmuseum** (June–Oct Tues–Sat 10am–noon & 3–5pm; €2) offers a pretty thorough roundup of Montafon costumes, together with a history of the local dairy industry. At the southern end of the square stands the **Hotel Taube** (see p.552), where keen skier Ernest Hemingway stayed in winter 1925, dashing off a couple of chapters of *The Sun Also Rises* between trips to the pistes. Nowadays the quickest route to the heights above the town is provided by the three-stage **Hochjochbahn** cable car (late June to late Oct; €15.50 return; Ⓦwww.hochjoch.at), which ascends to the 2300-metre **Sennigrat**, whence you can walk back down towards the valley or embark on any number of alternative hiking trails.

Another hub for local acitivities is the **Alpenbad-Montafon** (mid-May to early Sept, Ⓦwww.aktivpark-montafon.at), an outdoor swimming pool with various fountains and slides ideal for kids, which is surrounded by other leisure facilities including Biketouren im Montafon (Ⓣ05556/72166), a bike rental outlet that also offers guided tours at various levels (€18.50 per day).

Practicalities

Schruns **tourist office**, just south of the main square at Silvrettastr 6 (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 2–6pm, Sat 9am–noon & 4–6pm; ⓣ05556/721660, ⓦwww.schruns-tschagguns.at), has details of **private rooms** (2) and can point you in the direction of the town campsite. *Hotel Taube*, bang in the centre of the village on Kirchplatz (ⓣ05556/72384; rooms with shared facilities 4, en suite 7), is a traditional family-run *Gasthof* with plenty of atmosphere. *Hotel Krone*, Auserlitzstr 2 (ⓣ05556/72255, ⓦwww.hotelkrone-schruns.com; summer 6, winter 7), just across the river has traditionally furnished rooms and a sauna. If you want to be really pampered, then try the *Montafoner Hof* (ⓣ05556/7100-0, ⓦwww.montafonerhof.com; summer 8, winter 9) in the centre of the village of **Tschagguns** which adjoins Schruns to the west. The village is smaller and less picturesque but the hotel is one of the best in the region, offering modern rooms in an attractive low-rise building with heated pool, and inclusive mountain excursions.

For **food**, *Bel Paese*, Im Gässle 6, has tasty thin-crust pizzas for around €7, and a generous choice of pasta dishes; while the more traditional *Gasthaus zum Kreuz*, Kirchplatz 18, has the usual range of regular Austrian dishes as well as tasty and cheap fondues. The best place for an evening **drink** is the *Einbahn*, at Batloggstr 5 next to the railway line, a cosy Irish-style pub stuffed with an appealing array of junk.

Hiking in the Silvretta Alps

The hiking options from Bielerhöhe range from the obvious and easy two-hour potter around the **Silvretta Reservoir** through a great circular day-trip that takes in the Wiesbadener Hütte, to legs of the ambitious multi-day Silvretta Traverse. Some options are detailed below, but be sure to pick up the free **hiking map** from local tourist information offices, which have plenty of other routes detailed such as the trip to the Saarbrückener Hütte – scenically it's one of the finest and allows those using local buses to descend to Vermuntsee and pick up their return ride there.

The Wiesbadener Hütte

A rewarding **one-day circular walk** begins from the top of the 2036-metre **Bielerhöhe** pass on the Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse and takes a total of around five hours. The walk begins by heading south alongside the Silvretta Stausee (or reservoir), then enters the wild-looking Ochsental, with big mountains coming into view as you progress, including Piz Buin and the glaciated peaks that form the Austro-Swiss border. After about two hours the trail reaches the *Wiesbadener Hütte* (2443m; mid-June to Sept; ⓣ05558/4233, ⓦwww.wiesbadener-huette.com), set on a shelf above the moraines of the Vermunt glacier and a good place for lunch. Excellent views from the terrace overlook a mass of ice and snow and a bevy of attractive peaks, and walkers with alpine experience and the necessary equipment to deal with crevassed glaciers can spend an extra day or two based at the hut in order to scale some of them – Piz Buin, Silvrettahorn and Dreilanderspitze are especially appealing. The less well-equipped or experienced should continue the circuit back to Bielerhöhe along the clear path that rises to the stony Radsattel (2652m), with an option of diverting for a half-hour's easy climb (some mild scrambling involved) to the crown of the Hohes Rad for a far-reaching, 360-degree panorama. From the Radsattel, descend to Radsee in the Bieltal Valley along a trail back to Bielerhöhe.

The Silvretta Traverse

A **six-day crossing** of the Silvretta Alps can be made by linking a series of huts that dot the parallel north-flowing glens that drain the snowbound frontier mountains. On

The Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse

Between May and October, seven daily buses head south from Schruns to tackle the **Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse**, a scenic mountain toll road that ascends to the Silvretta Reservoir and Bielerhöhe Pass at the southeastern end of the Montafon Valley. From the summit of the pass, it's possible to catch connecting services that descend into the Paznaun Valley towards Landeck in the Tyrol. The road is open from around May to October, though will stay open or open early if conditions allow; tolls are €11.50 per car or €10 with a receipt for local accommodation; bus passengers pay €3 each.

The road begins to climb in earnest just beyond the village of Partenen, 20km south of Schruns, rising steeply from the valley floor via a succession of hairpins. A tortuous ascent to the Vermunt Reservoir is followed by another steep climb to the larger Silvretta Reservoir and the **Bielerhöhe** saddle: the 2036-metre summit of the Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse. It's from the Bielerhöhe that several of the best local hikes begin (see below), which has given rise to a car park, a trio of accommodation options – including the *Madlenerhaus* mountain hut (☎05558/4234, ⓦwww.madlenerhaus.at; beds €10), and the *Berggasthof Piz Buin* (☎05558/4231, ⓦwww.pizbuin-silvretta.at; ❹) – and a couple of places to eat too. They all bask in the stupendous views across the reservoir towards the **Silvretta range**, with the 3312-metre

this west to east traverse the Silvretta chain is revealed at its scenic best, while plenty of escape routes are available in case the weather turns bad – which is always possible, especially early in the summer. The recommended **map** is *Kompass Wanderkarte* no. 41 (Silvretta Verwallgruppe) at 1:50,000. For more on the Austrian hut-to-hut system, see p.47.

Day 1: Start at St Gallenkirch in the Montafon Valley and wander south through the Gargellental to Gargellen village or as far as the unwardened *Madrisa Hütte* (get the key from the *Haus Wulfenia*, a *Gasthof* in the centre of the village), about 45 minutes beyond.

Day 2: Cross the Vergaldnerjoch, which is reached via either the Vergaldatal, or through the more challenging Wintertal and over the Valzifenzer-Joch. The route then crosses the Mittelbergjoch before dropping to the *Tübinger Hütte* (July–Sept; ☎0664/2530450).

Day 3: Given good conditions, you can tackle a small crevasse-free glacier below the Plattenjoch (2728m) – from which fine views show the Grosse and Kleine Seehorn – then gain the Schweizerlücke, and descend to the *Saarbrücker Hütte* before continuing to the Bielerhöhe and cutting south to the *Wiesbadener Hütte* (see above). An alternative, which adds a day, would be to proceed via the *Silvretta Hütte* (mid-July to mid-Oct; ☎083/4221306 ⓦwww.silvrettahuette.ch) in Switzerland then back into Austria via the uncomplicated 2751-metre Klosterpass and along the Klostertal, past the *Saarbrücker Hütte* (July–Sept ☎05558/4235) to the entrance of the Oschsental (see above).

Day 4: From the *Wiesbadener Hütte*, the traverse proceeds over the Radsattel and Getschnerscharte and on to the *Jamtal Hütte* (☎05443/8408) which is set 10km into the lengthy Jamtal Valley.

Day 5: Head from the *Jamtal* over straightforward Kronenjoch mountain pass into Switzerland and to the *Heidelberger Hütte* (☎664/4253070, ⓦwww.heidelberger huette.at).

Day 6: Cross the Ritzenjoch, then descend through the Lareintal to Galtür – an easier alternative is to amble downstream through the Fimbertal to Ischgl in the Paznauntal.

▲ Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse

Piz Buin presiding over a ridge of high Alps that marks the border between Austria and the Swiss canton of Graubünden. On the other side of the Bielerhöhe, the road descends into the Paznaun, one of the Tyrol's most attractive valleys, arriving after 20km in the skiing and hiking resort of **Ischgl** (see p.525).

Travel details

Trains

Bregenz to: Bludenz (19–27 daily; 1hr); Dornbirn (19–28 daily; 15min); Feldkirch (18–27 daily; 45min); Hohenems (15–26 daily; 24min); Innsbruck (6 daily; 2hr 40min); Rankweil (18–28 daily; 40min).
Bludenz to: Innsbruck (8 daily; 1hr 45min); Schruns (12–16 daily; 20min); Tschagguns (11–15 daily; 22min).

Buses

Au to: Damüls (4 daily; 25min).
Bregenz to: Au (8–13 daily; 1hr 20min); Bezau (13–17 daily; 1hr); Egg (13–17 daily; 45min); Schwarzenberg (4–15 daily; 50min–1hr 30min).
Lech to: Bludenz via Langen am Arlberg by train (7 daily; 1hr 20min).
Schruns to: Bielerhöhe/Silvretta dam (May–Oct only: 7 daily; 35min).

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History

Austria has existed as a state with clearly defined borders only since 1918. Before that the concept of Austria – whether cultural or political – was always a vague one: an agglomeration of lands gradually accumulated and held together by representatives of two remarkable dynasties – the Babenbergs and, more notably, the Habsburgs.

The Celts and the Romans

Reminders of Austria's **prehistoric** inhabitants can be glimpsed in the country's museums – Vienna's Naturhistorisches Museum holds the Venus of Willendorf, a 25,000-year-old carved fertility figure, while 4000-year-old ceramics left by inhabitants of a lakeland village can be seen in the Salzkammergut town of Mondsee. However, it was only really with the arrival of the **Celts** in the first millennium BC that organized, military and industrial civilization in the Austrian lands began to take off. Initially, Celtic control of a highly lucrative **salt trade** was the key to their wealth and power. Salt mines above the modern-day village of **Hallstaat** in the Salzkammergut (see p.449) were in use from around 1000 to 500 BC. The many Bronze and Iron Age finds yielded by archeological digs in the region (and on show in Hallstaat's Heimatmusem) reveal a society that combined a high degree of industrial organization in the mine workings themselves with a pronounced appreciation for the good things in life – as evinced by the many intricate ornaments and ceremonial daggers that have been unearthed. In the eighth century BC, Celts from Hallstaat went on to open salt mines in **Bad Dürrnberg**, above the town of Hallein (see p.400) just south of Salzburg. As at Hallstaat, there's now a popular show-mine in the old mine workings, and an important museum of Celtic culture. The other important concentration of Celtic power was in the southeast, where the kingdom of **Noricum**, centred on present-day Carinthia, established an ascendancy over neighbouring tribes in the second and first centuries BC. Celtic power here was based on the exploitation of the iron ore found deep in the Carinthian valleys around modern-day Hüttenberg. The ruined city on the **Magdalensberg** (see p.333) just north of Klagenfurt is thought to have been Noricum's capital.

Iron from Noricum was particularly valued by the Romans, who used it to make javelins, and the growth of trade between Rome and the Celts gradually led to the establishment of Roman economic and cultural hegemony over the region. This culminated in the establishment of Roman political control: Roman legions occupied Austria south of the Danube in 15 BC, and the area was carved up into new administrative units. Western Austria (the Vorarlberg and much of the Tyrol) became the Roman province of Rhaetia, most of central and southern Austria was included in a new, reconstituted Noricum, while the east became part of Pannonia, which also embraced much of present-day Hungary. For the next four centuries, the Danube served as the natural military frontier between the empire and the barbarian tribes beyond, with a series of fortifications, or Limes, built along the river's banks. Best preserved of the Roman sites in Austria today is Carnuntum southeast of Vienna (see p.196), an important military camp on the Danube frontier that went on to flourish as a civilian settlement. Other important centres of Roman power were Vindobona

(Vienna), Juvavum (Salzburg), Brigantium (Bregenz), Flavia Solva (Leibnitz, in Styria) and Virunum (north of Klagenfurt), and museums in each of these places preserve good Roman-era archeological collections.

The Dark Ages and the Babenbergs

The Romans finally abandoned the Danube frontier in the 430s, leaving the Austrian lands open to penetration by a succession of migrating tribes. The two main groups were German speaking: the **Alemanni**, who settled in the Vorarlberg region as well as neighbouring Switzerland; and the **Bavarians**, who occupied Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Salzburg and the Tyrol. Biggest of the non-German groups were the **Slavs**, who moved into Carinthia and Styria, although the east of the country was periodically subjected to incursions by other races, Huns and Avars among them. Vestiges of the Celto-Roman population, still speaking a Latin dialect, retreated into the high mountain valleys on the south side of the Alps. The period from the seventh to the ninth century was marked by the gradual **Germanization** of the Austrian lands, led mostly by Bavarian warrior-aristocrats, a process that often went hand in hand with the missionary activity of the Christian church. **Salzburg** became an important ecclesiastical centre after St Virgil's establishment of a monastery there in around 700, and it was from here that ambitious proselytizing clerics set off to convert the pagan inhabitants of central and southern Austria – many of whom were linguistically and culturally Slav at this point, although they were to lose their distinctive identity as the centuries passed.

The Ostmark and the rise of the Babenbergs

A semblance of political order was imposed on central Europe by the Frankish empire of **Charlemagne**, who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800. The Franks established a military colony in what is now Upper and Lower Austria in order to keep disorderly eastern European tribes at bay – carving out a territory referred to by nineteenth-century historians as the **Ostmark**, or "Eastern March". With the collapse of the Frankish empire in 888, the Ostmark fell under the sway of Saxon kings Otto the Great and his son Otto II, who contributed to the ongoing Germanization of the area. The Ostmark was handed over to the **Babenberg dynasty** in 976, whose job it was to protect the empire's eastern frontiers, once more marked by the Danube. The Babenbergs ruled the territory for the next 270 years, first as margraves and later as dukes.

In their search for some kind of official birthday for their country, many twentieth-century Austrian scholars latched onto a Latin parchment from around 996, which contains the first known mention of the name **Ostarrichi**, forerunner of the modern "Österreich". However, there's little evidence to suggest that the term was in common usage at the time, and for most of the Middle Ages the region held by the Babenbergs was known as *provincia orientalis* (or "eastern province", simply a Latin version of the original "Ostmark"). The Babenberg margravate certainly didn't conform to the borders of modern-day Austria. To begin with, it was confined to a small stretch of the Danube centred most probably on Melk, but it gradually expanded eastwards as far as the River Leitha and northwards as far as the River Thaya. Successive Babenbergs founded

a number of monasteries in the region, in particular **Leopold III** (1095–1136), who founded Klosterneuburg in Lower Austria (see p.154), and was later canonized for his good works, becoming the country's patron saint.

In 1156, during the reign of **Heinrich II Jasomirgott** (1141–77), the Babenbergs' margravate was at last elevated to the status of a duchy by the Holy Roman Emperor, with its new capital at Vienna. However, in 1246 the Babenberg male line came to an end with the death of Duke Friedrich II (1230–46) on the battlefield. In 1251, the future Bohemian king, Otakar II, took up residence in Vienna and claimed the duchy for himself, shoring up his claim by marrying Friedrich II's widow.

The Habsburgs

While Otakar was laying claim to the Babenbergs' inheritance, he was also putting himself forward as a candidate for the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. In the end, though, the throne was handed in 1273 to **Rudolf of Habsburg**, a little-known count whose ancestral home was the castle of Habichtsburg (hence Habsburg) above the River Reuss in modern-day Switzerland. In 1278 Otakar was defeated (and killed) by Rudolf's forces at the **Battle of Marchfeld**, to the east of Vienna, allowing Rudolf to lay claim to the Duchy of Austria, as Ostmark was now known. The Viennese, who had backed Otakar, were less than pleased about the outcome of the battle, and weren't easily placated by Rudolf's son, Albrecht, who had been given the duchy by his father.

The Habsburgs, though, were destined to rule over Austria for the next 640 years. At this time, "Austria" still only comprised (roughly) modern Upper Austria, Lower Austria and a southerly province acquired by Rudolf, Styria. Gradually however, the Habsburgs were able to consolidate their Austrian powerbase by annexing surrounding territories (often through marriage treaties rather than military conquest) and appointing family members to rule over them. Much of Carinthia and the Tyrol was acquired by the end of the fourteenth century, although some parts of the Tyrolean northeast remained in Bavarian hands until around 1500. One area that remained immune to Habsburg expansion at this time was the territory of Salzburg (much more than just the city of Salzburg itself, this was an area that roughly corresponds to today's Salzburger Land), which was ruled over by powerful prince-archbishops, and retained its independence until 1815.

The way in which acquired territories were shared out among members of the Habsburg family threatened to dilute the dynasty's power until the emergence of **Friedrich III** (1440–93). Despite numerous setbacks – he was besieged in the Hofburg by one of his own family in 1462 and briefly lost control of Vienna to the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus in 1485 – Friedrich managed to unite all the Habsburg-held lands under his own control. In 1452, he became the last **Holy Roman Emperor** to be crowned in Rome, and the following year elevated the family's dukedom to an archdukedom. The Holy Roman Empire, famously dismissed by Matthias Corvinus as "neither holy, Roman, nor an empire", was something of a fantasy, whose emperor, theoretically, ruled over all the German-speaking lands. Though this was far from reality, the position of Holy Roman Emperor gave the Habsburgs enormous prestige, and they persisted with its imperial pretensions, passing the title down the male line, until its eventual dissolution in 1806.

Maximilian I

In the meantime, the Habsburgs continued to add to their dynastic inheritance through a series of judicious marriages by **Maximilian I** (1459–1519) and his offspring, prompting the oft-quoted maxim, adapted from Ovid: "let others wage war; you, happy Austria, marry." Building on the gains of his father Friedrich III, Maximilian did more than anyone else to turn the Habsburg family possessions into a lasting multinational empire. His 1477 marriage to Mary of Burgundy – the only child of Charles the Bold, she died while hunting in 1482 – won him a belt of territories running through modern Belgium and the Netherlands; the marriage of their son Philip the Fair to princess Juana of Castille (daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain) ensured that a Habsburg would inherit the Spanish throne. Maximilian also consolidated Habsburg control of the Austrian heartland, driving the Bavarians out of northeastern Tyrol and defeating the Hungarians to win back Vienna – which subsequently flourished as a cultural centre under his rule. Maximilian also entered into an alliance with the Hungarian royal house, which stipulated that if the Hungarian throne fell vacant then it would pass to the Habsburg family.

Maximilian's son Philip the Fair died in 1506 (an event that drove his wife insane, and historians have since dubbed her "Juana the Mad"), and it was Maximilian's grandson **Karl V** who received this vast, painstakingly assembled inheritance. Crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, Karl ruled over an empire on which, it was said, the sun never set, with lands stretching from its Spanish possessions in South America to Vienna itself – bolstered in 1526 by the addition of the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary when the childless Hungarian king was killed by the Turks at the **Battle of Mohács**. Under Karl, Habsburg power was at its zenith, although the French – aided at various times by the north German princes and the English – prevented the Habsburgs from establishing a truly pan-European hegemony.

At this point the Turks began to advance deep into Habsburg territory. In the summer of 1529 they captured Budapest, and by September the Sultan's vast army was camped outside Vienna. Although it is the later siege of 1683 that captured the imagination of historians, the **1529 Siege of Vienna** was a much closer-run thing. The Ottoman Empire was at its zenith and Vienna was defended only by a small garrison under Count Salm. However, having shelled the city, the Turks suddenly withdrew – whether because of bad weather or some other reason, no one knows – back to Hungary.

Reformation and Counter-Reformation

The Habsburg were too unwieldy to be ruled by one man, and Karl V decided to divide the imperial heritage among his successors. The Habsburgs' Spanish possessions fell to Karl's eldest son Philip II of Spain, while the core central European lands of Austria, Bohemia and Hungary passed to his younger brother **Ferdinand I** (1553–64). The unity of the empire was increasingly threatened by the collapse of traditional Catholicism brought about by the **Reformation**. By the sixteenth century, the population of Austria (excluding the Tyrol) was overwhelmingly Protestant, and the Habsburg dynasty itself increasingly ambiguous in its support for the Catholic Church. Ferdinand I invited the Jesuits to Vienna in 1556 in order to shore up the decaying structures of Catholic belief, even though the atmosphere at his court was one of tolerance, attracting a wide range of European intellectuals – both Catholic and Protestant – to Vienna. The ideas of the Reformation were allowed to flourish

further under Ferdinand's son and successor **Maximilian II** (1564–76), who was himself suspected of being a closet Protestant by contemporaries.

It was in the Austrian lands of the empire that the Catholic Church began its fightback. The Jesuits, now established in Vienna, were introduced to Styria in the 1580s by Maximilian II's brother the archduke Karl, while the Counter-Reformation gathered momentum. Protestants became alarmed, and began to demand more and more legal rights from an imperial court that was under increasing pressure to put the full weight of its support behind one side or the other. **Rudolf II** (1576–1612), who presided over a remarkably tolerant and humanist court in the Bohemian city of Prague, tried to placate both sides, merely serving to postpone a violent religious conflict that was bound to break out sooner or later. After the brief inter-regnum of the Protestant-leaning **Matthias I** (1612–19), the accession to the throne of the fanatically Catholic **Ferdinand II** (1619–37) pushed the Protestant nobles of Bohemia towards armed rebellion. The conflict widened to involve neighbouring European states, and in the resulting Thirty Years' War the Habsburg court became increasingly identified with the Catholic ideology of the Counter-Reformation. Protestant sympathies were treated as a sign of disloyalty to the dynasty, and Protestants everywhere were subjected to a harsh crackdown. Ferdinand II's devout grandson **Leopold I** (1658–1705), who had initially trained for the priesthood, epitomized the relationship between the dynasty and Catholic piety, a relationship that increasingly relied on showmanship and spectacle – Leopold's endless rounds of praying and fasting, together with his pilgrimage journeys to cult centres like Mariazell (see p.292), were widely publicized.

The Ottoman threat

Hardly a competent warrior-king himself, Leopold I was lucky to be on the throne at the time of the **1683 Siege of Vienna**, when the Habsburgs scored their greatest military victory, the defeat of the **Ottoman Turks** outside Vienna. Ottoman power had been advancing steadily across Europe from the fourteenth century onwards, and had penetrated as far as Vienna (the "city of the golden apple", as the Turks called it) once before, in 1529. On that occasion, the Turks mysteriously withdrew, despite the fact that the city had been only lightly defended. Ever since, however, the Turks had been a constant threat on the empire's southeastern borders, and the struggle against them was to provide the Habsburgs with a defining sense of historical mission. Grandiose hilltop fortresses like Hochosterwitz (see p.335) and Riegersburg (see p.187) served to keep the Ottomans at bay, while the Styrian capital **Graz** was for a time a vast armed camp from which Habsburg counter-offensives were launched. The Habsburg-Ottoman border shifted back and forth throughout the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries, with the defeat of the Ottomans at the **Battle of Szentgotthàrd** (1664) finally ushering in a period of apparent stability. However, Ottoman ambitions revived a generation later, and the sudden and unexpected Ottoman advance on Vienna in 1683 led to an Austria-wide panic. At the approach of the Turks, Leopold, and anyone else who had the money, fled to the safety of Linz and Passau.

In their absence, Vienna was confronted by an army of over 200,000. Protected by a garrison of just 10,000 men, the Viennese were understandably ready to make peace with the grand vizier, **Kara Mustafa**. The grand vizier's crucial mistake, however, was that he was overconfident. Loath to share the booty among his army (which would be inevitable if they took the city by force), he orchestrated a two-month siege of the city. By September, however, a relief

▲ 1683 Siege of Vienna

force of Poles, under their king **Jan Sobieski**, and sundry German troops under the Duke of Lorraine, had come to Vienna's aid. On September 12, the papal legate Marco d'Aviano conducted a Mass on the hills above the city and, though outnumbered, the imperial forces managed to rout the Turks, in the process gaining some 20,000 buffaloes, bullocks, camels and mules, 10,000 sheep, corn and flour, sugar, oil and, most famously, coffee. Diamonds, rubies, sapphires and pearls, silver and gold, and "the most beautiful sable furs in the world", belonging to Kara Mustafa, fell into the grateful hands of King Sobieski. Vienna was quickly followed up by further Habsburg successes, with armies led by one of the heroes of the siege, **Prince Eugène of Savoy**, penetrating deep into Ottoman territory. Victory at the **Battle of Zenta** (now in Serbia) in 1697 was followed by the Peace of Karlowitz, which granted the Habsburgs control of all of the old kingdom of Hungary, including Transylvania and much of modern-day Croatia. Prince Eugène's capture of **Belgrade** in 1718 more or less stifled any further Ottoman dreams of expansion in Europe.

Karl VI (1711–40)

At the same time that the Ottomans were being pushed back in the east, Austria was engaged in a long-running war with the French, who were contesting Habsburg control over much of the Low Countries. A string of victories between 1701 and 1714 (again, mostly presided over by Prince Eugène) re-established Austria as the prime military power on the European mainland, ushering in another (albeit short-lived) period of peace and prosperity. The main beneficiary was Leopold I's second son **Karl VI**, a

free-spending monarch under whose reign Austrian Baroque art and architecture blossomed. This was especially marked in the capital, where the disappearance of the Ottoman threat provoked a rash of building activity. Damaged churches were repaired, aristocrats built palaces in the suburbs, and Karl undertook various prestigious architectural projects – Vienna's finest Baroque church, the Karlskirche (see p.130), among them.

Maria Theresia (1740–80)

The area in which Karl VI singularly failed, however, was in producing a male heir to the throne. In the end, he had to accept the fact that his eldest daughter, **Maria Theresia**, was going to have to take over when he died. In an attempt to smooth her accession, Karl introduced the so-called **Pragmatic Sanction** in 1713, which allowed for female succession, and got all the states nominally within the Holy Roman Empire to promise to recognize his daughter's right to the Habsburgs' hereditary lands. Naturally enough, everyone agreed with the emperor while he was alive, and as soon as he died immediately went back on their word.

So it was that Maria Theresia found herself forced to fight the **War of the Austrian Succession** (1740–48) as soon as she took over from her father. For a while, she was even forced to hand over the imperial title to Karl of Bavaria in an attempt to pacify him, though it was eventually regained and handed to her husband, Franz Stephan of Lorraine (she herself, as a woman, could not become Holy Roman Emperor). At the end of the war in 1748, Maria Theresia was forced to cede Silesia to Prussia and, despite an attempt to win it back during the **Seven Years' War** (1756–63), it remained, for the most part, in Prussian hands.

On the domestic front, Maria Theresia's reign signalled the beginning of an era of reform, influenced by the ideas of the **Enlightenment**. The empress created a formidable centralized bureaucracy, taking power away from the provincial Diets, in order to ease through her reforms. When the pope abolished the Jesuit order in 1773, Maria Theresia took the opportunity of introducing a state education system. In 1776 she abolished torture, and passed de facto abolition of the death penalty (though hard labour usually killed the convict within a year in any case). Despite her reforms, it would be wrong to get the impression that the empress was some free-thinking democrat. She believed wholeheartedly in absolutism and, as a devout Catholic, ensured Catholic supremacy within the empire with yet more anti-Protestant edicts.

Josef II (1780–90)

With the death of her husband in 1765, Maria Theresia appointed her eldest son, **Josef II**, as co-regent. But it wasn't until after the empress's death in 1780 that Josef's reforming zeal could come into its own. His most significant edict was the 1781 *Toleranzpatent*, which allowed freedom of worship to Lutheran, Calvinist and Greek Orthodox groups. Like his mother, Josef was himself a devout Catholic, but was even more determined to curtail church – and particularly papal – power. To this end, he dissolved four hundred contemplative or "idle" monasteries and, as many saw it, was bent on "nationalizing" the church.

Under Josef II all religious processions (previously a daily occurrence on the streets of Vienna, and an important feature of rural life) were banned except the Corpus Christi procession. The blessed sacrament was no longer carried through the streets, causing the faithful to fall to their knees. Pope Pius VI was so concerned, he came to Vienna in person in 1782 to try to change the emperor's mind, but to no avail. With the best of intentions, Josef interfered in every aspect of his citizens' lives, causing widespread resentment. For – again

like his mother – despite his enlightened policies, Josef was very much the despot. He was, above all, responsible for creating the Habsburgs' secret police force, which was to become so notorious in the nineteenth century.

The Napoleonic era

The emperor Leopold II, who unenthusiastically succeeded Josef II in 1790, died suddenly of a stroke after a reign of less than two years. As a result, Leopold's eldest son became the emperor **Franz II** (1792–1835). No great military man – his troops had been fighting the French for two years before he bothered to show himself at the front line – Franz was an unlikely candidate to become one of Napoleon's great adversaries.

In his first Italian campaign, **Napoleon** succeeded in humiliating the Habsburg forces at Mantua, and was within 150km of Vienna when the emperor sued for peace. It was a scenario that was repeated again in 1800 when Napoleon's forces were once more marching on Vienna. By 1803, the Habsburgs had lost their possessions in the Low Countries in addition to several territories in northern Italy to the French. Napoleon added insult to injury by declaring himself emperor the following year, with the clear intention of re-establishing the Holy Roman Empire under French hegemony. In retaliation, Franz II declared himself Emperor Franz I of Austria (a hitherto non-existent title) – ironically, the gesture looked more like an admission of defeat, since Franz was already Holy Roman Emperor.

In 1805, in alliance with Russia and Britain, Austria decided to take on Napoleon again, only to suffer a crushing defeat at the **Battle of Ulm**. Unable to stop the advance of the *Grande Armée*, the allies decided to regroup further east, leaving Napoleon free to march on Vienna, where he arrived on November 13, 1805. The imperial family had already taken flight to Hungary, carrying the contents of the Hofburg with them. Though there was no fighting, having 34,000 French troops billeted in the city put an enormous strain on the place, and supplies quickly ran short. The French stayed on until January 12, 1806, having exacted taxes and war reparations and appropriated many works of art, including four hundred paintings from the Belvedere. Four days later, Franz II returned to Vienna amid much rejoicing, though in political terms there was little to rejoice about. The Treaty of Pressburg, concluded after a defeat at the **Battle of Austerlitz** in December 1805, had left the Habsburgs without their Italian possessions, the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg. Further humiliation followed in 1806 when Napoleon established the Confederation of the Rhine and Franz was forced to relinquish his title of Holy Roman Emperor.

For the next few years, there was no hope of the Austrians exacting any revenge. The Habsburgs applauded an uprising in the **Tyrol** (which Napoleon had awarded to his Bavarian allies) led by patriotic innkeeper **Andreas Hofer**, but shied away from offering concrete support. In the spring of 1809, however, as Napoleon encountered problems fighting Wellington in Spain, the Austrians seized the moment to reopen hostilities. Although they were once more defeated at Ratisbon, the Austrian forces under the emperor's brother, the Archduke Karl, managed to regroup to the east of Vienna. Once more Napoleon marched on Vienna. As usual, the imperial family had taken flight to Hungary, but this time the city tried to defend itself. Napoleon reached the outskirts on May 10, 1809, and sent two emissaries in to negotiate. They were promptly lynched by the Viennese; the French bombardment started the following evening. It was an uneven battle: the French fired some 1600 shells, and killed 23 civilians; in return, according to one Viennese eyewitness, "our batteries shot

off a few shots; they were ineffective". The next day, the city capitulated, its 16,000-strong garrison no match for 100,000 French troops.

Napoleon's *Grande Armée* went on to suffer its first major defeat ten days later at the **Battle of Aspern**, just east of Vienna. However, the Archduke Karl failed to press home his advantage, and Napoleon succeeded in holding on to Vienna, going on to defeat the Austrians decisively at the **Battle of Deutsch Wagram** six weeks later, when the Austrians threw in the towel. Vienna was forced to celebrate the new emperor's birthday on August 13 and, in the peace, signed on October 14, the Austrians were forced to give up Galicia and Croatia. Two days later Napoleon left Vienna, but without leaving instruction for his French engineers to blow up the city's defences. On October 29, the French held a farewell ball, and towards the end of the following month, the emperor Franz crept back incognito into the Hofburg. Soon after Wagram, the revolt in the Tyrol finally collapsed due to lack of aid from Vienna, and Andreas Hofer was captured and shot

Clemenz **Metternich** was appointed the chief minister of Austria by Franz, and began to pursue a policy of rapprochement. His greatest coup in this direction was getting Napoleon to marry the emperor Franz's 18-year-old daughter, Marie Louise, in March 1810. By 1813, with the tide turning against Napoleon, Metternich even managed to persuade his reluctant emperor to join the latest anti-French grand alliance.

Following the defeat of Napoleon at Leipzig and his exile to Elba, the victorious powers (Austria, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia) met for the **Congress of Vienna** in autumn 1814. If nothing else, the Congress was a great social success or, as one participant famously put it, *"Le congrès danse, mais il ne marche pas"*. By New Year 1815, most of the foreign delegates and their hangers-on had outstayed their welcome. The congress was costing the emperor a fortune that even he could not afford, forcing him to raise taxes, while many of the participants were living on credit notes. The congress dragged on, however, until after Napoleon escaped from Elba, finally winding itself up in May 1815, just twelve days before his final defeat at the **Battle of Waterloo**.

The congress nonetheless managed to establish a status quo in Europe. Many of the borders agreed upon in Vienna were to endure for over a century. In the peace deal, Austria won back much of north Italy and Galicia, Croatia, the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg, In addition, the city of **Salzburg** and its attendant territories were brought into Austria for the first time. On Metternich's advice, claims to the Netherlands, and other far-flung territories that would be hard to defend, were relinquished. The congress also pledged itself to further regular meetings between the heads of the victorious states – at which it was agreed that in order to maintain international peace they would combine to suppress any further revolutionary uprisings within Europe.

The Vormärz

Following the Congress, Austria enjoyed more than thirty years of peace and stability, a period known retrospectively as the **Vormärz** – literally "pre-March" – because it preceded the March 1848 revolution. In later years, the Austrians would look back on this period through rose-tinted spectacles as a time of introspective domesticity, played out to the tunes of Johann Strauss the Elder and the melodies of Franz Schubert.

This period was also, however, marked by one of the most oppressive regimes in the history of the Habsburgs. The man most closely associated with the conservative politics of *Vormärz* was Metternich. Under him, and his chief of

police Count Josef Sedlnitzky, the vast machinery of the civil service that Josef II had designed to help push through reforms was now used to thwart further reforms. Censorship and the activities of the secret police and its informers did so much to stifle intellectual life that by 1848 the playwright Franz Grillparzer reflected miserably, "Despotism has destroyed my life, at least my literary life."

With the death in 1835 of the emperor Franz I of Austria (former Franz II of the Holy Roman Empire, the title he was forced to relinquish in 1806), the Habsburgs faced something of a crisis, as the heir to the throne, **Ferdinand I** – a victim of Habsburg inbreeding – was, in the vocabulary of the day, an "imbecile", nicknamed "Nandl der Trottel" (Ferdy the Dotty). He was, in fact, nothing of the sort: he could be perfectly coherent, but suffered badly from epilepsy, which affected his short-term memory. To combat Ferdinand's deficiencies, a Regency Council was established, with Ferdinand as chairman – or, in his absence, his nephew the Archduke Ludwig – and his brother Franz Karl, Count Kolowrat and Metternich as permanent members. Within the council, Metternich had to struggle to maintain his influence.

The 1848 revolution

With the deposition of the French king and the outbreak of revolution in Paris in late February 1848, a wave of **revolutionary fervour** spread throughout Europe. Austria, groaning under the weight of an oppressive bureaucracy, was no exception. On March 13, the Estates of Lower Austria, consisting of nobles and senior clergy, were due to meet in the Landhaus on Vienna's Herrengasse. They were pressing for various reforms including the freedom of the press, but top of the agenda was the removal of Metternich. In the morning a crowd gathered outside the Landhaus and, after listening to a German translation of the inflammatory speech given recently by the Hungarian revolutionary Lajos Kossuth in the Hungarian Diet, forced their way into the building. At around 1pm, a detachment of Italian grenadiers fired into the crowd, killing around thirty unarmed protesters, mostly students, and sparking a revolution.

That evening, after playing for time, Metternich finally resigned and fled from the capital (disguised as a washerwoman according to popular legend). The emperor – who, when told of the outbreak of revolution, had apparently said "But do they have permission?" – immediately made a rapid retreat, declaring, "Tell the people I agree to everything." A National Guard was formed – with Johann Strauss the Younger as *Kapellmeister* – augmented by an academic legion of armed students, with whom they were to man the city in place of the despised imperial troops. In addition a constitution was promised, and a "Responsible Ministry" of bureaucrats formed to produce it. On April 25, a **constitutional monarchy** was proposed, with two chambers elected by limited franchise based on property. This failed to quench the thirst for radical reform, and on May 15 rioting ensued in favour of a single chamber parliament elected by universal suffrage. The emperor and his entourage quickly fled to Innsbruck in a stagecoach, as barricades were erected around the city.

Elections were duly held throughout the empire (with the exception of Italy and Hungary, which were busy with their own revolutions) and the **first parliament** in Habsburg history met on July 22 in the unlikely surroundings of the Hofburg's Winterreitschule. The deputies were by no means revolutionaries, the majority coming from the educated middle classes, although close to a third were of peasant origin. Hampered throughout by disputes between the various nationalities, the assembly did manage to pass one lasting piece of legislation, the **emancipation of the peasantry**. By August, the court felt secure enough to

return to Vienna, bolstered by General Radetzky's military victory over the rebels in Italy and the recapture of Prague by General Windischgrätz.

The spark that lit the final fuse of the Viennese revolution took place on October 6. A battalion, due to be sent to fight against Kossuth's Hungarian revolutionaries, mutinied and joined forces with radicals in the National Guard. Civil war broke out as some within the National Guard fired on the radicals. In the confusion, the war minister, General Latour, was lynched by the mob and the imperial family removed themselves once more, this time to Olmütz (Olomouc) in Moravia. As Windischgrätz marched his troops towards the capital, the radicals among the academic legion and the National Guard erected barricades and awaited the final showdown. Their only hope lay in the possibility of a Hungarian relief force, which in the event arrived too late. After several days' bombardment and around two thousand casualties, Windischgrätz flushed out the last of the rebels on October 31.

The accession of Franz-Josef I

Back in Olmütz, the emperor Ferdinand, with his brother Franz Karl, was coerced by the imperial family into renouncing the throne in favour of the latter's 18-year-old nephew, **Franz-Josef I**. A new government was formed under the leadership of the arch-conservative Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, while the assembly continued to meet in nearby Moravia to try to thrash out a new constitution. Then, to the astonishment of the assembly, on February 28, 1849, Schwarzenberg announced that as the emperor had himself formulated a new constitution, their services were no longer required. Although the new constitution granted equal rights to all, it was anything but liberal, granting the emperor the power of veto over all legislation, the power to dissolve parliament and rule by decree, and the power to dismiss and appoint ministers as he saw fit. Meanwhile in Hungary, the Austrians were forced to swallow their pride and enlist the help of the Russians in order to defeat Kossuth's Hungarian revolutionaries once and for all.

The Ausgleich

After ten years of relative peace, Franz-Josef suffered his first of many embarrassing military setbacks at the **Battle of Solferino** in 1859 against the French. It was not so much the resultant loss of Lombardy that was the problem, but the opportunity it gave the Hungarians to demand their independence once more. In an attempt to placate them, Franz-Josef agreed in 1861 to establish a two-chamber parliament in Vienna. The Hungarians remained unimpressed and failed to send delegates to fill any of their 85 allotted seats in the lower house.

Five years later, the empire was rocked by an even greater crisis with its army's humiliating defeat at the **Battle of Königgrätz** in the Austro-Prussian War. Not only did the Habsburgs finally lose the battle for hegemony over the rest of Germany, but they were forced to strike a deal with the Hungarians (while studiously ignoring the demands of the empire's other nationalities).

With the 1867 **Ausgleich**, or Compromise, the so-called Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary was established. According to this new arrangement, Franz-Josef was to be crowned king of Hungary (he was already emperor of Austria), and the Hungarians were to get their own parliament in Budapest, with autonomy over everything except defence, foreign affairs and the overall imperial budget. Everything within Hungary was to be prefaced with a *k. or königlich* (royal), everything in the rest of the empire was to be prefaced with the

initials *k.k.* or *kaiserlich-königlich* (imperial-royal), while everything Austro-Hungarian was prefaced with *k.u.k.* or *kaiserlich-und-königlich*.

At the same time, delegates from the "Austrian" half of the empire met in Vienna's parliament. Among the delegates were Czechs, Poles, Croats, Slovenes, Italians and German-speakers from every corner of the empire, who spent most of their time arguing over language issues, and abusing each other both verbally and physically. The number of people eligible to vote increased gradually until universal male suffrage was finally introduced in 1907, but in reality, the emperor still ruled supreme since he and his ministers could pass any laws they wanted as "emergency measures", not to mention dissolve parliament and rule by decree (which they did on numerous occasions).

Fin-de-siècle Austria

The economy suffered its worst financial crisis ever in the crash of May 1873 – the fault, it was rumoured by some, of Jewish financiers. The Jew, had long been a stock Viennese scapegoat, and with the continuing influx of orthodox Jews from the rural provinces of the empire, attracted to the city by the work opportunities opened up by growing industrialization, **anti-Semitism** began to flourish. It found a spokesman in the figure of the pan-German nationalist **Georg von Schönerer**, some of whose followers used to wear the effigy of a hanged Jew on their watch chains. Schönerer's political career faltered, however, after 1888, when he was sent to prison for breaking into the offices of the Jewish-owned newspaper, the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*.

Anti-Semitism was given a more respectable, populist twist by **Karl Lueger**. This Vienna-born politician became leader of the Christian Social Party, whose combination of Catholicism, anti-Semitism and municipal socialism went down alarmingly well with the Austrian electorate. In 1897, Lueger began a successful spell as mayor of Vienna. (The crowd that turned out for his funeral in 1910 was the largest the city had ever seen – among the mourners was the young Adolf Hitler.)

Most middle-class Jews, understandably, gravitated towards the other side of the political spectrum, dominating the upper echelons of the **Social Democratic Workers' Party** (SDAP) after it was founded in 1889. The party's chief ideologue before World War I was the Prague-born Jew Viktor Adler, whose peculiar brand of **Austro-Marxism** was to dominate the party's thinking for the next half-century. As far as Adler was concerned, capitalism was doomed to failure, so the party could afford to adopt a peaceful approach to politics until the time was right for revolution.

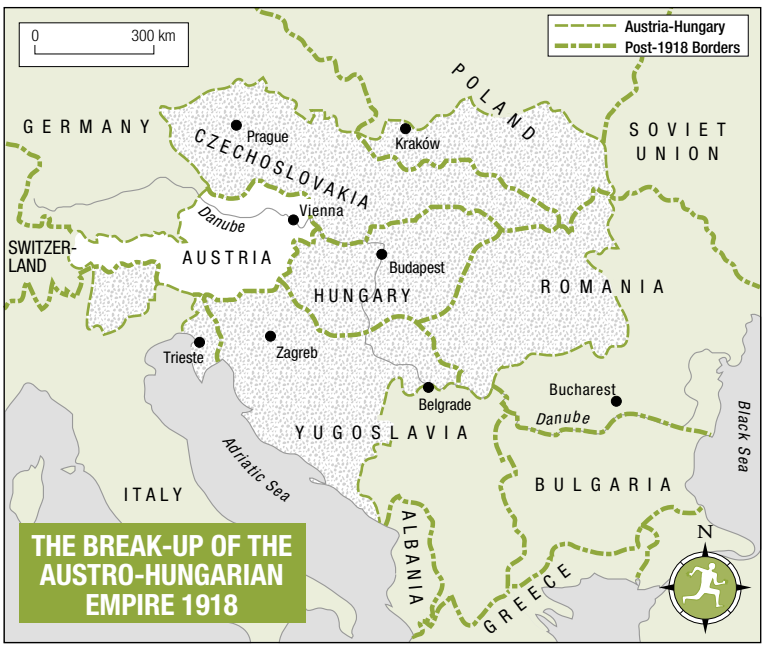
In among all the tensions between Right and Left, Jew and gentile, rich and poor, fin-de-siècle Austria – particularly the capital Vienna – succeeded in nurturing an astonishing variety of intellectual and artistic creativity, much of it inspired by assimilated Jews. In music, **Arnold Schönberg** and his followers Alban Berg and Anton Webern changed the face of classical music with their atonal revolution. **Gustav Mahler** turned heads both as a composer and as boss of the Staatsoper. In medicine, **Sigmund Freud** coined the term "psychoanalysis", and expounded on the new discipline in his seminal *On the Interpretation of Dreams*. In 1897, the artist **Gustav Klimt** led a revolt against the artistic establishment, known as the Secession (see p.108); following in his footsteps were the likes of **Egon Schiele** and Oskar Kokoschka. Otto Wagner left the most visible legacy of this period, in the Jugendstil and early Modernist buildings that can still be seen on the streets of Vienna today.

World War I

Ever since Prince Eugène of Savoy's great military campaigns against the Ottomans, the Austrians had been in possession of considerable territories in the northern Balkans, bringing a large number of **South Slavs** within the borders of the empire. To begin with, most of these Slovenes, Croats and Serbs were loyal to a Habsburg dynasty which seemed to offer them protection against the Turks, but the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century put increasing pressure on Austria's relationship with its non-German subjects. In particular, the emergence of a Serbian principality (which had won independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830) convinced those Slavs living under Habsburg rule that self-government was a realizable political goal. In 1908 Austria's annexation of the hitherto Ottoman province of Bosnia-Herzegovina – which contained a mixture of Serbs, Croats and Muslim Slavs – stretched Austrian-Slav relations to breaking point.

In 1914, Franz-Josef's nephew and heir **Archduke Franz-Ferdinand** committed an act of gross political folly in choosing to visit the Bosnian capital **Sarajevo** on June 28, St Vitus Day – a day sacred to the Serbs. Together with his wife Sophie, the archduke was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip, a young Bosnian Serb revolutionary who had been supplied with weapons by Serbia's chief of military intelligence. There was little genuine sadness in court circles, for, as Stefan Zweig bluntly put it, the archduke "lacked everything that counts for real popularity in Austria; amiability, personal charm and easy-goingness". Even his uncle, the emperor Franz-Josef, was more relieved than anything else, as the two got on notoriously badly.

To begin with, there was also very little action by Austria on the diplomatic front, but eventually on July 23 Franz-Josef and his ministers sent an **ultimatum**



to Serbia, with an impossible set of conditions and a 48-hour time limit. Serbia capitulated to almost all the conditions, but Austria-Hungary declared war anyway, without consulting its German or Italian allies. Unwilling to see any further extension of Austrian power in the Balkans, the Russians immediately mobilized, with Britain and France (Russia's allies) following suit. By August 12, the major European powers were at war.

Perhaps surprisingly, the outbreak of war brought **patriotic crowds** onto the streets of Vienna, and other cities around the empire, with Left and Right alike rallying round the Habsburg cause. Of course, everyone thought the war would be over by Christmas; it was only after several years of military defeats, huge casualties and food shortages that the population began to turn against the war. On October 21, 1916, Viktor Adler's son, Friedrich, took matters into his own hands and assassinated the Austrian prime minister, **Count Karl Stürgkh**. At his trial in May the following year, Friedrich Adler gave such a damning indictment of the war that his execution was postponed so as not to boost the antiwar cause further. On November 21, 1916, Franz-Josef died at the age of 86, leaving the throne to his 29-year-old great-nephew Karl.

The **emperor Karl I** (see p.194) is perhaps best known for his bungled attempt at negotiating a separate peace for his empire with the western allies in March 1917. The approach was rebuffed at the time and a year later became public knowledge, causing huge embarrassment to all concerned. Only victory on the battlefield could now save the dynasty – it was not to come.

In October 1918, the empire began to crumble from within, with **national committees** taking over in the empire's regional capitals. In Vienna, the Social Democrats, who were in favour of self-determination for the empire's various nationalities, set up a provisional government under Karl Renner. On November 2, 1918, with the end of the war in sight, the Hungarian battalion guarding Schönbrunn upped and went, leaving the imperial family and their servants unguarded. The next day an armistice was signed, and eight days later the emperor Karl I agreed to sign away his powers, withdrawing first to Eckartsau outside Vienna, and eventually, in 1919, going into exile in Switzerland.

The First Republic

The **Austrian Republic** – or more correctly **Deutsch-Österreich** or "German Austria" – was proclaimed from the steps of Vienna's parliament on November 12, 1918. Most of the Habsburg Empire's constituent nationalities – whether Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes or Croats – had by now opted to form their own national states. What was left was a territory composed of the German-speaking parts of the empire, although even here the Austrians had to endure one particularly humiliating territorial loss – the German-speaking **South Tyrol** was given by the allies to Italy as a reward for the country's participation in the war. Few believed that the new, small-scale Austria would survive as a viable independent state, and there was precious little enthusiasm for the new country among its people. The Christian Socials wanted a constitutional monarchy, the Pan-Germans wanted union with Germany, while the Socialists, more specifically, wanted Anschluss with a Socialist Germany. In the proclamation of November 12, the country was even described as "a constituent part of the German Republic". In the *Länder*, both the Tyrol and Salzburg voted overwhelmingly in favour of Anschluss with Germany (requests which were denied by the international community), while the Vorarlberg voted to join the Swiss.

In February 1919, the first national **elections** took place, creating a coalition government of the SDAP and the Christian Socials under the chancellorship of Social Democrat Karl Renner. Nevertheless, a political vacuum continued until the end of the year, with soldiers' and workers' councils threatening to follow the Soviet revolutionary example of neighbouring Bavaria, which was in the throes of Bolshevik revolution at the time, and Hungary. There were even two unsuccessful attempts by the newly formed Austrian Communist Party (KPÖ) to stage a putsch, in April and June 1919.

The new government's foremost task, however, was to feed the population, particularly that of Vienna. Deprived of its former territories, and hampered by a bad harvest, the country managed it only with the help of the Allied Famine Relief programme. The government's next most arduous job was to negotiate the **Treaty of St-Germain** with the victorious allies. Many in the delegation still hoped for Anschluss with Germany, but it was not to be. The Austrians (along with the Hungarians) were branded an "enemy state", while the rest of the so-called "successor states" like Czechoslovakia were not, and were expressly forbidden ever to undertake Anschluss with Germany.

Paramilitary politics

For most of the First Republic, the country remained split between the heavily industrialized Social Democrat-dominated capital of **Vienna** (nicknamed *Rotes Wien* or "Red Vienna" because of its political affiliations), where some thirty percent of the population lived, and the deeply conservative Catholic rural **Länder** where the Christian Socials dominated. What made this political polarization all the more dangerous was that by the mid-1920s both sides were backed up by **paramilitary organizations**. The right-wing *Heimwehr*, on the one hand, had their origins in armed groups that had defended Austria's borders in the chaotic early days of the republic. Based on individual *Länder* and each with their own leader, the *Heimwehr* organizations didn't share a political platform but were united in their opposition to the Left.

The Social Democrats, on the other hand, had created an ad hoc army, the *Volkswehr*, in the last weeks of the war. They continued to dominate the *Volkswehr* until it was replaced by the establishment of the official Austrian army, or *Bundeswehr* – as a reaction to this, the SDAP formed its own armed division, the *Schutzbund*. Throughout the 1920s the party mouthed the rhetoric of class war, while pursuing moderate, social-democratic policies. In 1926, the party went even further and declared itself ready to use force if necessary to protect the interests of the workers. The bourgeois press interpreted this as a call for revolution, though the slogan coined by Socialist ideologue Otto Bauer was "democratic as long as we can be; dictatorship only if we are forced to it, and insofar as we are forced". To the dismay of many on the Left, however, the SDAP proved itself much less willing to resort to violence than its right-wing foes.

Austro-fascism

The onset of the **Great Depression** further destabilized what was already a fragile democracy. In the elections of November 1930, the *Heimwehr*, under Prince Starhemberg, won its first parliamentary seats for its newly formed political wing, the *Heimatblock*. The Social Democrats, meanwhile, emerged for the first time since 1919 as the largest single party, with 41 percent of the vote, but once more it was the Christian Socials who went on to form a series of weak coalition

governments. The last of these was formed in May 1932 under the chancellorship of **Engelbert Dollfuss**, with a parliamentary majority of just one.

On March 4, 1933, in an attempt to break a tied vote in parliament, Social Democrat Karl Renner resigned as speaker in order to free himself to vote. When Renner's two deputy speakers from the Christian Social and Pan-German parties both followed suit, Dollfuss seized the opportunity to **dissolve parliament**, claiming it could no longer function properly. The same weekend, Adolf Hitler won an absolute majority in the German parliament. The onset of Nazism had a sobering effect on the majority of Austrians, particularly the SDAP, which immediately dropped its call for Anschluss.

On March 15, Dollfuss sent the police in to prevent parliament from reconvening. In response, the SDAP leadership procrastinated and held back from calling in the *Schutzbund*; two weeks later the latter was outlawed. Dollfuss was determined to combat the threat from Nazi Germany, but instead of agreeing to an anti-Nazi alliance with the SDAP the chancellor threw in his lot with **Mussolini**, holding the first of many meetings with the Italian dictator in April. On May 21, no doubt prompted by Mussolini, Dollfuss established the Austro-fascist **Vaterländische Front** (VF), under the slogan "Austria Awake!"

In May, the Communist Party was banned and in July the Austrian Nazi Party outlawed. A violent showdown with the Social Democrats, who still controlled municipal councils in Vienna and many other cities, followed in **February 1934**. The first incident took place in Linz, where the local *Schutzbund* on their own initiative opened fire on police. Three days of nationwide struggle ensued, with the bloodiest set-to in Vienna's Karl-Marx-Hof housing estate, which Dollfuss eventually ordered the army to shell into submission. The SDAP had stumbled into civil war, and it was soundly beaten. The party was swiftly outlawed, and its leaders fled abroad or were imprisoned.

Just as it appeared he had successfully established an **Austro-fascist state**, Dollfuss was assassinated on July 25, 1934, during an abortive putsch staged by Austrian Nazis, apparently without the knowledge of Hitler. His successor, **Kurt Schuschnigg**, was forced to rely ever more heavily on Mussolini for support. As a foreign policy this proved disastrous, for in 1935 Hitler and Mussolini began to patch up their differences, and suddenly Schuschnigg found himself being urged by Mussolini to come to an agreement with Hitler. Schuschnigg did just that in the Austro-German agreement of July 11, 1936. In return for Hitler's recognition of Austria's "full sovereignty", Schuschnigg agreed to an amnesty for all Nazi prisoners, and the appointment of various "prominent nationalists" – not Nazis, but authoritarian conservatives with similar leanings – to his government.

In January 1938, the Austrian police raided the apartment of Leopold Tavs, one of Schuschnigg's deputies, and discovered a plan to overthrow the government with German help. As tension between the two countries mounted, the Nazi ambassador, Franz von Papen, suggested Schuschnigg should visit Hitler at his mountain retreat at **Berchtesgaden** by the Austrian border. At this meeting, Hitler ranted and raved and eventually demanded, among other things, that Schuschnigg hand over yet more key governmental posts to the Austrian Nazi Party. Schuschnigg acquiesced and agreed to appoint the Nazi **Dr Arthur Seyss-Inquart** as interior minister.

As the Austrian Nazis increased their activities, Schuschnigg decided to chance his arm by ordering a **plebiscite** on March 13 to decide the country's future, reckoning (probably correctly) that the majority would vote against the Anschluss. Hitler was certainly not prepared to risk electoral defeat and bullied Schuschnigg into cancelling the plebiscite. Göring went even further and demanded the

resignation of Schuschnigg and his entire government. On March 11, Schuschnigg announced his resignation over the radio, in order to avoid "spilling German blood", and Seyss-Inquart took over the chancellorship. President Wilhelm Miklas initially refused to accept Schuschnigg's resignation and Seyss-Inquart's appointment. By the following morning, though, even Miklas had caved in. Seyss-Inquart was made chancellor and wasted no time in inviting the German army into the country on the pretext of preventing civil war.

Anschluss and World War II

In the event of the **Anschluss**, there was no bloodshed: German troops crossed the border into Austria on March 12, 1938, and encountered no resistance whatsoever. Hitler himself began his slow and triumphant journey to the capital in the wake of his troops. First he visited his birthplace of Braunau-am-Inn, then he moved on to his "home town" of Linz, where he was received with such enthusiasm by the locals that he decided there and then to incorporate Austria into the Greater German Reich, rather than pursue the more conciliatory path of preserving Austrian autonomy. Eventually, on March 15, Hitler appeared on the balcony of the Hofburg before thousands of jubilant Viennese.

As a propaganda exercise, Hitler also decided to go ahead with a **plebiscite**, which took place on April 10. The 99-percent "Yes" vote in favour of the Anschluss came as no surprise. In fact, those known to be opposed to the Nazis, including Schuschnigg and his followers, had already been arrested – some 76,000 by the time Hitler arrived in Vienna – while Jews and other "undesirables" were barred from voting. On the other hand, many whom one would expect to have opposed the Anschluss publicly declared themselves in favour, including the archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Theodor Innitzer, and the Social Democrat Karl Renner.

Although the Treaty of St-Germain precluded any Anschluss with Germany, only the Soviet Union and Mexico lodged any formal international protest against the invasion. Meanwhile, the very name "Österreich" was wiped off the map, initially replaced by the term **Ostmark**, but eventually simply divided into seven *Gaue*, or districts, ruled by Nazi *Gauleiter*.

The fate of Austria's Jews

The Anschluss unleashed a "volcanic outburst of popular anti-Semitism", in the words of eye-witness George Clare. Jews were dragged out into the street, and physically assaulted and humiliated. Most **anti-Semitic excesses** were concentrated in Vienna, where 95 percent of Austria's 183,000 Jews lived. In one instance, in the well-to-do Viennese suburb of Währing, a group of Nazis urinated on local Jewish women as they forced them to scrub the streets in front of cheering onlookers. A large number of the city's most prominent Jews were arrested, and either sent to the camps or released with orders to leave the country.

In May 1938, without warning, 2000 Jews were arrested and shipped off to **Dachau**, primarily to encourage still more Jews to emigrate. On the night of November 10–11 – dubbed **Kristallnacht**, or "Crystal Night" – the majority of synagogues in the Reich were torched, and numerous Jewish premises ransacked. Another 7800 Austrian Jews were arrested that night, 4600 of whom were sent to Dachau. By the outbreak of World War II, more than half of Vienna's Jews had emigrated.

Once the Nazis had invaded Poland, their policy towards the Jews changed, with deportation to the camps favoured over forced emigration. The **deportations** began in earnest in February 1941, while emigration came to a complete standstill in November the same year. Of the 57,000 Jews now left in Austria, more than half had been sent to the death camps by June 1942. By the end of the war, around 200 Austrian Jews had managed to survive in hiding, with just over 2000 returning after the war.

Collaboration and Resistance

Although Hitler preferred to import German Nazis to many positions within Austrian Nazi hierarchy, the Austrians themselves provided more than their ten percent population ratio of concentration-camp guards. The Linz-born Nazi **Adolf Eichmann**, who ran Vienna's "Central Office for Jewish Emigration" and was one of the architects of the "Final Solution", is probably the most infamous, though the film *Schindler's List* has also increased the infamy of the Vienna-born camp commandant Amon Goeth. Another Linz-born Nazi, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, rose to number two in the SS to Heinrich Himmler, while the Carinthian Odilo Globocnik, with ninety other fellow Austrians on his staff, supervised the death of some two million Jews in the extermination camps of Sobibor, Treblinka and Belzec.

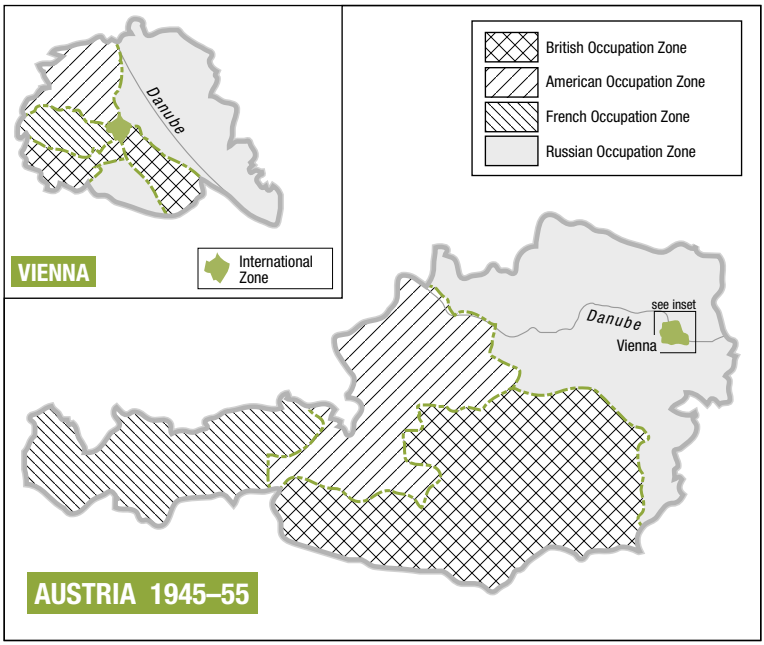
Organized **resistance** to Hitler was, it has to be said, extraordinarily difficult for anti-Nazi Austrians, given the level of collaboration among their fellow citizens and the way in which the Nazis had wiped out their potential leadership. Aside from individual acts of heroism, there was very little significant non-Communist resistance within Austria. Partisan activity was restricted to a few remote alpine areas, and it wasn't until spring 1944 that an organized home resistance, codenamed **O5**, began to emerge.

Unlike every other Nazi-occupied country, however, the Austrians had no official government-in-exile. Exiled Austrian politicians spent their time bickering, with Otto von Habsburg (the son of the last emperor) in North America, the Communists in the Soviet Union and the two mainstream political parties caught between the two. The most positive diplomatic step took place in November 1943, when the Allied Powers published the **Moscow Declaration** stating that Austria was a "victim" of Nazi aggression and that it should be re-established as a "free and democratic state".

The liberation

By April 5, 1945, the Red Army was nearing the outskirts of the Austrian capital. The O5 leadership under Major Szokoll had planned to initiate an **uprising** against the Nazis the very next day, but were betrayed by a junior officer, Lieutenant Walter Hanslick. Several of the O5 leaders were arrested, tortured and publicly hanged. The revolt had failed and it took the Russians another three days to reach Vienna's outskirts, and another five days' street fighting to finally win control of the city.

The commander in chief of the Russian troops in Austria, Marshal Tolbukhin, gave his assurances that the Soviets would liberate the country, respect the social order and refrain from appropriating any territory. In reality, Soviet troops spent much of the next few months raping Austrian women and stealing anything they could find. The actions of the Red Army during this period gave rise to the grim Viennese joke that Austria could probably survive a third world war, but it could never endure a second Liberation.



Postwar Austria

On April 27, the Soviets sponsored the formation of a **provisional government** under the veteran Social Democrat Karl Renner, causing widespread alarm about Soviet intentions among the Western Allies. Although Renner's cabinet was made up, for the most part, of Socialists and members of the newly founded right-wing People's Party, or ÖVP, the Communists were given three posts, including the key positions of interior minister and education and information minister. As a form of protest at this unilateral action, the Western Allies refused to recognize the Renner government.

Meanwhile, there was continuing confusion over the **occupation zones**. Although the Moscow Declaration had stated that Austria was a victim of Nazi aggression, the country was nevertheless to be divided just like Germany, with Vienna, like Berlin, lying deep within the Russian sector. However, controversy over the exact zoning of Vienna helped delay the arrival of Western troops in the capital until late August. The Russians took the opportunity of fleecing the capital and eastern Austria of all they could. Vienna, it was agreed, was to be divided between the four Allies, with the Innere Stadt preserved as an international sector, patrolled by one representative of each of the occupying powers. This comical sight on the streets of Vienna became the hallmark of the so-called "four-in-a-jeep" period – and the setting for the famous film *The Third Man* – when, as Karl Renner put it, Vienna was like a small rowing boat in which four elephants sat at the oars pulling in various directions.

▲ Russians entering Vienna

Elections and de-Nazification

In October the Western Allies finally recognized the Renner government, and the Russians, for their part, agreed to free elections. However, whatever hopes they might have had of the Communists gaining power in Austria were dashed by the results of the **November 1945 elections**. The Communists won just 5.4 percent of the vote, up from their previous high of 1.9 percent in 1932, but earning them just four seats in the 165-seat parliament, and the consolation prize of the Ministry of Electrification. In an almost exact repeat of the election results of the 1920s, the country remained split down the middle between Left and Right. Although the ÖVP won almost fifty percent of the vote, it was Renner who headed the new coalition government of the Socialist Party (SPÖ) and the ÖVP.

One of the most pressing and controversial tasks of the postwar era was the **de-Nazification** process. Initially, this was the responsibility of the Allied Powers: the Americans and the British busied themselves by handing out forms in which the respondents were invited to confess; the French, with collaborators of their own back home, were less keen to get involved; the Russians, predictably, were the most assiduous, though they were as concerned to remove political opponents as ex-Nazis. Of the half a million Austrians who were Nazi Party members, only a handful were executed at Nuremberg, mostly for crimes committed outside of Austria. Back in Austria itself, the government took over the de-Nazification process, condemning 38 Nazis to death and depriving the rest of their civil rights for a brief period before an amnesty was agreed in 1948. Some attempt was made to rid the state bureaucracy of its ex-Nazis, but inevitably many – including Eichmann himself, who fled to South America – slipped through the net.

Communist agitation

When the Red Army liberated Vienna in April 1945, few people thought that the city and the country would remain under **Allied occupation** for ten years. However, the Soviets were keen to pay back the Austrians for their mass

participation in the Nazi armed forces. At the postwar Potsdam conference, the Soviets were granted, instead of cash reparations for war damage, the right to all external German assets in eastern Austria. Over the next ten years, the Russians took this as a carte blanche to asset-strip the entire region of eastern Austria, transporting factories piece by piece back to the Soviet Union.

Soviet control of eastern Austria – the country's agricultural heartland – also gave them considerable political leverage. With the entire country suffering food shortages, the Soviets deliberately hoarded supplies from their sector, supplying them direct to workers in Soviet-run industries. This won them considerable support in the eastern zone, and increased unrest in the western zones. For, despite the Communists' electoral setback, the Russians still had hopes of taking control of Austria. The winter of 1946–47 was particularly harsh, and the Communists took advantage of this by fomenting **food riots** in May 1947. The rioters besieged the Austrian chancellery and called for a national strike. In the end, the putsch failed, because the Socialist trade-union leaders refused to support the strike, and the Russians held back from using military force.

While **Marshall Plan** aid from the West helped ease conditions throughout Austria from the summer of 1947 onwards, the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 and the Berlin blockade (June 1948 to May 1949) only increased political tensions. Despite their recent setbacks, the Communists had high hopes for the **national elections of October 1949**. However, though the ruling coalition lost ground, it wasn't to the Communists, who remained on 5 percent, but to the newly formed extreme right-wing **Union of Independents** (VdU), who scored 11.6 percent of the vote, attracting the support of the majority of ex-Nazi Party members, who had recently been given back their voting rights.

In autumn 1950, Marshall Plan aid was cut back drastically. With the Austrian government forced to increase sharply the price of food, coal and electricity, strikes broke out among workers in cities across Austria. Seizing the moment, the Communists staged their second and most serious **coup attempt**. Once again, it began with a Communist-inspired mass demonstration outside the chancellery, after which barricades were erected, roads blocked, tram tracks cemented up and bus windows broken. The Russians stopped police reinforcements in their sector from being called up, and it was only with great difficulty that the situation was kept under control. In the end, however, the Socialist trade unions and the government took sufficient steps to stem the tide, and the general strike held on October 4, though heeded by large numbers of workers in the Russian sectors of the city and eastern Austria, was called off the following day.

The Austrian State Treaty of 1955

The **withdrawal of the Allied Powers** from Austria in 1955 – or more specifically the Soviet withdrawal – was a unique event in the otherwise grim history of the Cold War, and something of a surprise, given the previously unscrupulous behaviour of the Soviets in Austria (and elsewhere in Europe).

For nearly ten years, negotiations over a **peace treaty** with Austria were at stalemate, with the Soviets insisting that a German peace treaty be prerequisite to an Austrian treaty. The Soviet threat over the future of Austria was used by them to try and forestall German rearmament. However, with the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, it was clear that this policy had failed. A struggle within the Kremlin then ensued over Soviet policy towards Austria. Following the death of Stalin, this struggle intensified and was eventually won by Khrushchev, who decided to use the Austrian State Treaty as a way

of initiating a period of **détente**. Hopes of creating a Communist Austria had died with the failure of the 1950 putsch. The Soviet sector meanwhile had been bled dry and was no longer of any great economic benefit. A neutral Austria, on the other hand, created a convenient buffer that split NATO's northern and southern flanks. And so on May 15, 1955, the **Austrian State Treaty**, or *Staatsvertrag*, was signed by the four powers in Vienna's Belvedere.

Consensus politics: 1955–83

With the popular vote split between Left and Right, the two main parties of the ÖVP and the SPÖ formed a succession of **coalitions** which lasted until 1966. To avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, a system of *Proporz* was established, whereby the ÖVP and the SPÖ shared equally every governmental and state post. In some ways institutionalized political corruption, this process began at the top among the ministries, and continued right down to the local post office. At the same time, various special bodies or chambers representing the various interest groups – the Chamber of Trade, the Chamber of Labour and so on – were established. Like *Proporz*, these new institutions ensured that the country enjoyed an unprecedented period of political and social stability, but left the parliament without an effective opposition and created a system open to widespread abuse. Like the Germans, though, the Austrians enjoyed a period of **economic growth and prosperity**, and there were few voices of complaint.

In the elections of 1966, the People's Party at last achieved an absolute majority and formed the first **one-party government** of the postwar era. Many Austrians feared a repeat of the 1920s, but in practice little changed. The system of *Proporz* and the institutions of the corporate state continued to hand out "jobs for the boys", and only at the very top level of government were the Socialists excluded from power. However, an economic downturn in the early 1970s increased support for the SPÖ, such that they won an outright majority in the elections of 1971. Under the chancellorship of **Bruno Kreisky**, the Socialists enjoyed thirteen years of power, during which Kreisky carried the SPÖ further away from their radical Marxist past than ever before. The end came in the elections of 1983 when the SPÖ lost its overall majority and was forced into a coalition government with, of all people, the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ).

The Waldheim affair

Having struggled to make the headlines of the international press in the 1960s and 1970s, Austria was catapulted onto the world media stage in 1986 during the campaign for the Austrian presidency. The candidate for the ÖVP was **Kurt Waldheim**, a figure of some international stature who had been UN secretary-general for ten years (1972–82). However, during the campaign, Waldheim's war record was called into question. From the summer of 1942 until the end of the war, he had served as a lieutenant in the Balkans with the German army. Waldheim was never a member of the Nazi Party (one of the initial charges) and there was never any clear evidence that he was directly involved in the atrocities committed by the army in the Balkans, though he was formally charged with (but never tried for) **war crimes** by the Yugoslavs after the war. What was more difficult to believe, however, was his claim that he had no knowledge of the deportation of Greek Jews to the death camps, despite being an interpreter for the Italian army in Greece for much of the war.

To the dismay of many around the world, these charges, albeit unproven, did Waldheim's candidacy no harm at all domestically, and he was duly elected to the Austrian presidency with 54 percent of the vote. The international campaign

against Waldheim began with the boycott of his swearing-in ceremony by the US ambassador, and culminated in his being put on the US Department of Justice's "Watch List". Waldheim became an **international pariah**, restricted in his state visits to Arab countries. At Waldheim's suggestion, a commission was set up to investigate the charges against him; however, far from exonerating him, the commission's report found him guilty of "proximity to legally incriminating acts and orders", a somewhat woolly phrase that could be applied to just about any Austrian who'd served in the German army. The British government, meanwhile, followed up the Yugoslav charge that Waldheim had been involved in war crimes against British commandos in the Balkans. The British enquiry concluded that Waldheim's rank was too junior to have had any influence over the fate of the commandos, adding that "knowledge is not itself a crime".

The rise and fall of the FPÖ

As if the Waldheim affair in the 1980s were not bad enough, the country had to contend with the rise of the FPÖ in the 1990s, under their charismatic leader **Jörg Haider**. A strange grouping of free-market liberals and ultraconservatives, the FPÖ was very much a fringe player in Austrian politics until 1983, when it became junior coalition partner with the SPÖ. In 1986, Haider became party chairman, causing the collapse of the SPÖ–FPÖ coalition and prompting elections. In his first stab at the polls, Haider won nearly ten percent of the vote, frightening the two main parties back into the grand SPÖ–ÖVP coalition of the postwar years. Unfortunately, this only served to play into Haider's hands, increasing popular resentment against the system of *Proporz* (from which the FPÖ is excluded) and thus boosting support for the FPÖ.

A dapper character with a sporty image, Haider presented himself as something new in national politics, free from the cynical power-sharing manoeuvres of the two main parties. Both of his parents were Nazi Party members who had felt sidelined by postwar Austrian society, and Haider himself deliberately courted far-right support in an attempt to gain notoriety. Elected provincial **Governor of Carinthia** in 1990, Haider expressed enthusiasm for Nazi employment policy in a speech a year later – precipitating his fall from office, but not his fall from popularity.

Haider's main electoral plank was to exploit the fears shared by many Austrians over the country's new wave of **immigrants**, who arrived from the former eastern bloc and war-torn Yugoslavia in considerable numbers in the 1990s. Nationalist frustrations were compounded by the country's entry into the **European Union** in 1995. Although in a referendum sixty percent voted in favour of joining, the austerity measures the country needed to implement in order to meet the criteria necessary for joining a single European currency convinced many that it had been the wrong decision.

Haider's FPÖ gradually increased its share of the vote throughout the 1990s, taking 22 percent of the vote in the general elections of 1994 and 1995. The biggest shock, though, was in Vienna, in 1996, when the SPÖ lost its overall majority for the first time in the city's history, with the FPÖ receiving 28 percent of the vote and becoming the main opposition in the Rathaus, ahead of the ÖVP (with 15 percent).

1999: the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition

In **1999**, campaigning on an openly xenophobic platform – with posters reading "Stop der Überfremdung. Österreich zuerst" ("Stop the foreign tide. Put Austria

first") setting the tone – the FPÖ surpassed even their own wildest dreams by getting 27 percent of the vote and squeezing into second place, beating the ÖVP into third by a margin of 415 votes (both the FPÖ and the ÖVP were awarded 52 seats in parliament). The SPÖ received 33 percent of the vote, their worst result since 1945, but most observers still assumed that the SPÖ and the ÖVP would once again close ranks to deny Haider a role in government. However, talks between the two parties broke down and President Klestil had no choice but to invite the ÖVP to enter talks with the FPÖ in the hope of forming a government. Klestil – himself no big-fan of Haider – knew that if he dissolved parliament and called new elections, the FPÖ would only get stronger.

Despite the fact that the FPÖ had got more votes, it was ÖVP leader **Wolfgang Schüssel** who fulfilled his dream of becoming chancellor, with several top posts going to the FPÖ. Haider refused to take part in the government, to the relief of many Austrians, preferring instead to remain in Carinthia. He quit the FPÖ leadership and was replaced by the less openly extremist Susanne Riess-Passer. The **ÖVP-FPÖ government** was sworn in by an unenthusiastic Klestil in February 2000. All other EU states immediately froze bilateral relations with Austria in protest at the FPÖ's inclusion in government. The new government's programme – centred on promises to cut government spending and pave the way for tax cuts – carefully avoided any reference to the FPÖ's pre-election rhetoric, and the EU withdrew their sanctions after six months. Those Austrians who had voted for the ÖVP or the FPÖ were resentful of the outside world's attempts to meddle in the nation's affairs. Others were deeply shamed by the FPÖ's accession to power, and launched the **Widerstand** (Resistance), a massive Heldenplatz demo followed by a rolling campaign of weekly demonstrations and cultural events designed to show that the liberal, tolerant values of centre-left Austria were still very much alive.

Paradoxically, the ÖVP profited more from the new situation than the cocksure FPÖ. Chancellor Schüssel, together with ÖVP foreign minister **Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, won popular support for the way in which they appeared to defend Austria's dignity against a hostile EU. The unpopular elements of government policy – cuts in public spending and the introduction of university fees for students – tended to be blamed on their more radical coalition allies. Meanwhile, the FPÖ began to unravel, with Haider increasingly at odds with the rest of the party, eventually forcing the resignation of the FPÖ ministers and prompting new elections.

To the relief of many Austrians, the FPÖ vote collapsed in the **2002 elections**, dwindling to a mere 10 percent, while the ÖVP surged to 42 percent – the biggest swing in postwar Austrian politics – and the SPÖ a fairly respectable 37 percent. The FPÖ's internal divisions continued after the election with Haider finally throwing in the towel and forming his own party, the Alliance or BZÖ in 2005. The **2006 elections** simply confirmed the collapse of the far-right vote with the FPÖ taking 11 percent and the BZÖ a mere 4 percent. In many ways, these elections re-established the postwar status quo, with the SPÖ and ÖVP receiving 35 and 34 percent of the vote respectively and entering once more into a grand coalition.

The Waldheim Affair and the rise of the FPÖ were a **PR disaster** for Austria, and there's a growing sense of bewilderment in the country that a nation that promoted itself so successfully as the home of Lipizzaner horses and happy alpine holidays should nowadays be internationally notorious for something entirely different.

Books

Books on the Habsburgs and the various artistic figures from Vienna's glorious past are easy to come by, but there's remarkably little written in English about the country in the twentieth century and not much fiction in translation – hence the rather uneven selection below. Books tagged with the symbol are particularly recommended.

History and Society

Steven Beller *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938*. Beller shows how the Jews played a central role in the vibrant cultural life of Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century. Thorough but rather on the dry side.

Gordon Brook-Shepherd *The Austrians*. Readable, if a little overearnest, history which attempts to trace the Austrian-ness (or lack of it) in the country's history from the Babenbergs to entry into the EU in 1994. Brook-Shepherd draws on his experience as a *Telegraph* correspondent and as someone who worked in the Allied High Commission in Vienna after World War II.

Frederic V. Grunfeld *Prophets without Honour*. A useful insight into the intellectual figures of fin-de-siècle Mitteleuropa, including Freud, Kafka and Einstein.

William M. Johnston *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848–1938*. Johnston knows his stuff, and though this is a pretty academic affair, it's a fascinating insight into fin-de-siècle Vienna.

Robert A. Kann *History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918*. Weighty and wide-ranging 600-page account of the empire, written in the 1970s.

Robert Knight *Contemporary Austria and the Legacy of the Third Reich 1945–9*. Highlights the failure of de-Nazification and the subsequent rise of Haider's FPÖ, the consequences of which were partly obscured by the country's postwar prosperity.

Elisabeth Lichtenberger *Austria: Society and Regions*. A scholarly account of the awkward twentieth-century history of Austria, taking the reader up to the late 1990s.

Frederic Morton *A Nervous Splendor: Vienna 1888/1889; Thunder at Twilight: Vienna 1913–1914*. Morton has trawled through the newspapers of the time to produce two very readable dramatized accounts of two critical years in the city's history. The first centres on the Mayerling tragedy; the second, on the Sarajevo assassination.

Robin Okey *The Habsburg Monarchy c.1765–1918*. A comprehensive and up–to-date account of the empire.

Hella Pick *Guilty Victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider*. Probably the best book on postwar Austria, both as a political history and as a meditation on the country's (often half-hearted) attempts to come to terms with the darker elements of its past.

Carl E. Schorske *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*. Fascinating scholarly essays on, among other things, the impact of the building of the Ringstrasse, and of Freud, Klimt,

Kokoschka and Schönberg on the city's culture.

A.J.P. Taylor *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809–1918*. Readable, forthright as ever and thought-provoking account of the demise of the Habsburgs.

Andrew Wheatcroft *The Habsburgs: Embodying Empire*. Wheatcroft's intriguing history traces the rise and fall of the Habsburgs from their modest origins in Switzerland to their demise at the head of the Austro-Hungarian empire, looking closely at individual family members, and the promotion of its dynastic image.

Memoirs and travel

George Clare *Last Waltz in Vienna; The Destruction of a Family 1842–1942*. Incredibly moving – and far from bitter – autobiographical account of a Jewish upbringing in inter-war Vienna that ended with the Anschluss.

Edward Crankshaw *Vienna: The Image of a Culture in Decline; Fall of the House of Habsburg*. Part travel journal, part history, and first published in 1938, this is a nostalgic, but by no means rose-tinted, look at the city. The same author's *Fall of the House of Habsburg* is an accessible popular history of the empire's last days.

Patrick Leigh Fermor *A Time of Gifts*. The first volume of Leigh Fermor's trilogy based on his epic walk along the Rhine and Danube rivers in 1933–34. Written forty years later in dense, luscious and highly crafted prose, it's an evocative and poignant insight into the culture of Mitteleuropa between the wars.

Helen Fremont *After Long Silence*. Fremont was raised as a Roman Catholic in the US only to discover as an adult that her parents were Austrian Jews who survived the Holocaust, but kept silent about it for forty years.

Claudio Magris *Danube*. In this highly readable travel journal from the 1980s, Magris, a wonderfully erudite Trieste-based academic, traces the Danube, passing through Austria along the way.

Reinhard Spitzty *How We Squandered the Reich*. Chilling and frank autobiographical account of a young Austrian idealist who became a member of the SS.

Peter Springer *Pushing Time Away*. A biography of the author's grandfather, David Oppenheim, giving insight into the wrangles in Freud's circle, Red Vienna, through the rise of fascism to the horrors of life and death in Theresienstadt.

Simon Wiesenthal *The Sunflower*. Wiesenthal relates an instance from his time at Mathausen (see p.230) when an ailing SS guard called him to his bedside and asked for forgiveness. In the second half of the book, Wiesenthal asks leading intellectuals to respond to the dilemma of forgiveness.

Stefan Zweig *The World of Yesterday*. Seminal account of fin-de-siècle Vienna written just before Zweig was forced by the Nazis into exile in South America, where he and his wife committed suicide.

Biographies

The Habsburgs

Steven Beller *Franz Joseph*. Shortest and most portable of the books on Franz-Josef; more of a political than a biographical account, it's a bit short on personal history.

T.C.W. Blanning *Joseph II*. Aimed at the general reader, this tells the story of Josef and his attempts at reform set against the background of the Austrian Enlightenment.

Jean Paul Bled *Franz Joseph*. Well-rounded account of the old duffer, with a smattering of the sort of scurrilous gossip missing in some other biographies.

Katerina von Burg *Elisabeth of Austria*. Recent biography of the endlessly fascinating empress who was assassinated by an Italian anarchist in 1898.

Edward Crankshaw *Maria Theresia*. Readable account of the "Virgin Empress", though disappointingly short on light touches.

Brigitte Hamann *The Reluctant Empress*. A surprisingly even-handed account of the Empress Elisabeth's extraordinary life, warts and all.

Joan Haslip *The Emperor and the Actress; Lonely Empress: Elizabeth of Austria*. The first is a detailed, steamy account of Franz-Josef's relationship with his long-term mistress, the actress Katharina Schratt. Retreading some of the same material, Haslip's Lonely Empress is a sympathetic portrayal of the Kaiser's unhappy spouse.

Alan Palmer *The Twilight of the Habsburgs; The Life and Times of the Emperor Francis Joseph and Metternich*. The first is the latest scholarly and somewhat weighty tome on the emperor; the latter, a solid account of the arch-conservative who ruled the roost in Vienna from 1815 to 1848.

Hitler

Brigitte Hamann *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*. A recently published account of Hitler's early youth in Vienna, which played an important part in helping form the prejudices of the Nazi leader.

Music

Peter Franklin *The life of Mahler*. A very accessible account of Mahler's life, in Cambridge UP's excellent "Musical Lives" series.

Egon Gartenberg *Johann Strauss, End of an Era*. The story of the waltz king and his world, originator of the *Blue Danube*, as well as *Die Fledermaus*.

Peter Gay *Mozart*. A slim, easy-to-read volume which nevertheless includes a good deal of stimulating analysis. Easily the best compact Mozart biography you can get.

Malcolm Hayes *Anton von Webern*. Not as well known as Schönberg, or as successful as Berg, Webern is seen by some as a progressive, and accused by others of being a Nazi sympathizer. Hayes, understandably, sits on the fence.

Alma Mahler-Werfel *Diaries 1896–1902*. Gushingly frank

diaries of a supremely attractive young woman, courted by the likes of Klimt and Zemlinsky. The period follows Alma until shortly after her marriage to the composer, Gustav Mahler.

Donald Mitchell *Gustav Mahler*. Mitchell's three-volume life of Mahler is a benchmark biography, as dense and wide-ranging as one of its subject's colossal symphonies.

Elizabeth Norman McKay *Franz Schubert: A Biography*. Straightforward biography of Schubert, which does the best it can to unravel the composer's brief life from the limited source material available.

H.C. Robbins Landon *Mozart, the Golden Years 1781–1791*. Big illustrated romp through the composer's mature Vienna years; a mixture of biography and musicology.

Freud

Frederick C. Crews (ed) *Unauthorized Freud*. Crews is virulently against psychoanalysis and has gathered together a whole host of Freud critics to put forward the revisionist case.

Sigmund Freud (ed. Peter Gay) *The Freud Reader*. A comprehensive selection of Freud's writings on art, literature and religion as well as the usual dreams and sexuality. Spans his entire career with useful introduction.

Peter Gay *Freud*. Big tome, a healthy mixture of biography and philosophy, with a bit of spicy drama for good measure.

Michael Jacobs *Sigmund Freud*. Brief biography of the bearded one, a quick trot through his ideas and the subsequent criticisms thereof.

Ernest Jones *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*. Abridged version of the definitive three-volume biography that Jones – one of Freud's disciples – published in the 1950s just before he died.

Wiesenthal

David Edmonds & John Eidinov *Wittgenstein's Poker*. On October 25, 1946, Wittgenstein came face to face with Karl Popper in Cambridge. The ensuing ten minutes produced an argument that shook the western world. Lucid and readable.

John Heaton & Judy Groves *Wittgenstein for Beginners*. Even this accessible, irreverent series fails to shed much light on the great philosopher's complex thinking.

Alan Levy *Nazi Hunter: The Wiesenthal File*. Thoroughly entertaining account of the controversial Vienna-based Nazi-hunter and the various Nazis he has helped to pursue, plus an account of the Waldheim affair.

Ray Monk *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*. Exhaustive biography of the perplexing philosopher; a model of its kind, Monk's book interweaves Wittgenstein's life and thought into an inseparable entity.

Hella Pick *Simon Wiesenthal: A life in Search of Justice*. Made with the subject's cooperation shortly before his death, this biography tracks his wartime sufferings and catalogues his postwar activities, Pick is sympathetic yet objective, and gives a rare glimpse into the octogenarian Nazi-hunter's personal life.

Austrian fiction and poetry

Ingeborg Bachmann *Songs in Flight: The Complete Poetry of Ingeborg Bachmann*. An acclaimed poet, novelist and short story writer from the 1950s, Bachmann was fascinated by the impotence of language and developed a voice of her own. *Songs in Flight* is a bilingual edition.

Thomas Bernhard *Cutting Timber; An Irritation; Wittgenstein's Nephew; Extinction; Concrete; The Voice Imitator*. Dense, stream-of-consciousness ruminations from the leading critic of the hypocrisy and mediocrity of postwar Austria. Any of the above will prove to be a good introduction to his inimitable style.

Hermann Broch *The Death of Virgil, The Guiltless*. With the Anschluss, Broch, who was of Jewish parentage, was briefly interned in a camp, where he began *The Death of Virgil*, which focuses on the last hours of Virgil's life and his questioning of the role his art has given him in society. *The Guiltless* is a more direct and readable examination of the dark side of mid-twentieth-century German culture.

Lilian Faschinger *Vienna Passion*. A complex tale whose black New Yorker heroine, researching into Anna Freud in Vienna, comes across the fascinating story of Rosa Havelka, servant to the empress and mistress to the heir to the throne at the end of the nineteenth century.

Elfriede Jelinek *Wonderful, Wonderful Times, The Piano Teacher* and *Lust*. The works of the Nobel Prize-winning Jelinek are often an uncomfortable read: *The Piano Teacher* delves into the world of masochism and voyeurism; *Wonderful, Wonderful Times*, which takes place in the late 1950s, digs up Vienna's murky past; *Lust* takes a dark and disturbing look at small-town life in the Austrian provinces.

Mike Mitchell *The Dedalus Book of Austrian Fantasy* Everything from Kafka to modern surreal for those whose taste is on the wild side.

Robert Musil *The Man Without Qualities; Diaries 1899–1941*. Often compared with Joyce and Proust, Musil's 1000-page unfinished novel, *The Man Without Qualities*, takes place at the twilight of the Habsburg Empire. Those addicted to Musil's irony-drenched, essayistic prose should also seek out his diaries.

Josef Roth *Radetsky March*. Pitifully underrated, this is Roth's finest work – a nostalgic and melancholic portrait of the moribund Vienna of Franz-Josef. Check also the secondhand stores for Roth's masterful short novels *Job*, *The Emperor's Tomb* and – above all – *Flight Without End*, a heartbreaking tale of dislocation and world-weariness.

Arthur Schnitzler *Hands Around; Dream Story*. Schnitzler's play features ten seductions, each of which shares at least one character with the next one until the circle is complete. A classic portrayal of Viennese fin-de-siècle society, it came back to prominence in the 1950s after being filmed as *La Ronde* by Max Ophüls, and enjoyed a comeback in the late 1990s on the stage in an adaptation called *The Blue Room* by David Hare. *Dream Story* was the inspiration for Stanley Kubrick's last film *Eyes Wide Shut*.

Harold B. Segel (ed) *The Vienna Coffeehouse Wits 1890–1938*. A rare opportunity to read translated snippets of work by Kaffeehaus regulars such as Karl Kraus, Peter Altenberg and

Felix Salten (the little-known author of *Bambi* and *The Story of a Vienna Whore*, one of which was made into a Disney cartoon).

Stefan Zweig *The Burning Secret and Other Stories*. Exquisitely wrought tales from fin-de-siècle Vienna, including *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, best and most poignant of Zweig's tales, and another story adapted into a movie by Max Ophüls.

Literature by foreign writers

Phil Andrews *Goodnight Vienna*. A light read for football fans as the English soccer coach is under threat, a key player is murdered and the trail leads beneath the streets of Vienna.

Elias Canetti *Auto-da-Fé*; *Crowds and Power*. The first novel of the Nobel-prize-winning Canetti, a Bulgarian-born Sephardi Jew who wrote in German, revolves around the life of a miserable scholar living in fin-de-siècle Vienna. *Crowds and Power* is a non-fiction work about mob mentality inspired by Canetti's participation in the torching of Vienna's Justizpalast in 1934.

Graham Greene *The Third Man*. Written by Greene as a film treatment, this differs quite a bit from the eventual celluloid version; it's printed along with *Fallen Idol*, a story set in London.

Eva Ibbotson *The Star of Kazan*. Any 9–12 year old who has fallen in love with the Lippizaner stallions will enjoy this old-fashioned adventure story.

John Irving *Setting Free the Bears*. Stream-of-verbiage novel centred (vaguely) on Vienna's zoo after the war.

Philip Kerr *A German Requiem*. Last volume of a gripping spy trilogy set in postwar Vienna.

Jody Shields *The Fig Eater*. It's 1910 in Vienna and a young girl, patient of Freud, is murdered. A flawed but intriguing mystery which conjures up a vivid picture of turn of the century Viennese society.

Frank Tallis *Mortal Mischief*; *Vienna Blood*. Intriguing mysteries set in Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century starring a disciple of Freud. Strong on detail and atmosphere.

Miscellaneous

Cecil Davies *Mountain Walking in Austria*. Includes a description of a route to the Grossglockner's summit via the Stüdl and Erzherzog-Johann huts – for experienced and well-equipped walkers – as well as some day-walks in the neighbouring Granatspitz group.

Esterbauer *Danube Bike Trail*. A detailed guide from Passau to Vienna, covering 350km – has excellent maps.

Dave Gosney *Finding Birds in Eastern Austria*. Precise details on where to find the feathered ones. Provides detailed route information on the Schneeberg, Hohe Wand and Newsiedler See.

Language

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German Language

Although a high proportion of Austrians speak some English, any attempts at learning a few phrases of **German** will be heartily appreciated. That said, German is a highly complex language which you can't hope to master quickly. The biggest problem for English-speakers is that German words can be one of three genders: masculine, feminine or neuter. Each has its own ending and a corresponding ending for any attached adjectives, plus its own definite article. If in doubt, it's safest to use either the neuter or male forms.

Pronunciation (and spelling) is less of a problem, as individual syllables are generally pronounced as they're printed – the trick is learning how to place the stresses in the notoriously lengthy German words. Though Austrians speak German with a distinct accent, and the Viennese have their own dialect, when speaking to a foreigner most folk will switch to standard German.

The following is a rundown of the basics you'll need on a short holiday to Austria. For more detail, check out the *Rough Guide German Phrasebook*, set out dictionary-style for easy access, with English–German and German–English sections, cultural tips for tricky situations and a menu reader.

Vowels and umlauts

a as in rather
e as in gay
i as in feet
o as in nose
u as in boot
ä is a combination of a and e, sometimes pronounced like e in bet (eg *Länder*) and sometimes like ai in paid (eg *spät*)
ö is a combination of o and e which has no real English equivalent, but is similar to the French *eu*
ü is a combination of *u* and *e*, like blue

Vowel combinations

ai as in why
au as in mouse
ie as in tree
ei as in trial
eu as in boil

Consonants

Consonants are pronounced as they are written, with no silent letters. The differences from English are:

j pronounced similar to an English *y*
r is given a dry throaty sound, similar to French
s pronounced similar to, but slightly softer than, an English *z*
v pronounced somewhere between *f* and *v*
w pronounced same way as English *v*
z pronounced *ts*

The German letter ß often replaces ss in a word: pronunciation is identical.

Consonant combinations

ch is a strong back-of-the-throat sound, as in the Scottish loch
sp (at the start of a word) is pronounced *shp*
st (at the start of a word) is pronounced *sht*

German words and phrases

Basics

Ja, Nein	Yes, no
Bitte	Please or You're welcome
Bitte schön	A more polite form of *Bitte*
Danke, Danke schön	Thank you, Thank you very much
Wo, Wann, Warum?	Where, when, why?
Wieviel?	How much?
Hier, Da	Here, there
Geöffnet, Offen, Auf	All mean "open"
Geschlossen, Zu	Both mean "closed"
Da drüben	Over there
Dieses	This one
Jenes	That one
Gross, Klein	Large, small
Mehr, Weniger	More, less
Wenig	A little
Viel	A lot
Billig, Teuer	Cheap, expensive
Gut, Schlecht	Good, bad
Heiss, Kalt	Hot, cold
Mit, Ohne	With, without
Rechts	Right
Links	Left
Geradeaus	Straight ahead
Geh weg	Go away

Greetings and times

Grüss Gott	Good day
Servus	Hi! or Goodbye (informal)
Guten Morgen	Good morning
Guten Abend	Good evening
Gute Nacht	Good night
Auf Wiedersehen	Goodbye
Auf Wiederhören	Goodbye (on the telephone)
Tschüss	Goodbye (informal)
Wie geht es Ihnen?	How are you? (polite)
Wie geht es dir?	How are you? (informal)
Heute	Today
Gestern	Yesterday
Morgen	Tomorrow
Vorgestern	The day before yesterday
Übermorgen	The day after tomorrow
Tag	Day
Nacht	Night
Mittag	Midday
Mitternacht	Midnight
Woche	Week
Wochenende	Weekend
Monat	Month
Jahr	Year
Am Vormittag/ Vormittags	In the morning
Am Nachmittag/ Nachmittags	In the afternoon
Am Abend	In the evening

Days, months and dates

Montag	Monday
Dienstag	Tuesday
Mittwoch	Wednesday
Donnerstag	Thursday
Freitag	Friday
Samstag	Saturday
Sonntag	Sunday
Ferien	Holidays
Feiertag	Public holiday
Jänner	January
Februar	February
März	March
April	April
Mai	May

Juni	June
Juli	July
August	August
September	September
Oktober	October
November	November
Dezember	December
Frühling	Spring
Sommer	Summer
Herbst	Autumn
Winter	Winter
Montag, der erste April	Monday, the first of April
Der zweite April	The second of April
Der dritte April	The third of April

Some signs

Damen/Frauen	Women's toilets
Herren/Männer	Men's toilets
Eingang	Entrance
Ausgang	Exit
Ankunft	Arrival
Abfahrt	Departure
Ausstellung	Exhibition
Autobahn	Motorway
Umleitung	Diversion
Achtung!	Attention!
Vorsicht!	Beware!
Not	Emergency
Notausgang	Emergency exit
Krankenhaus	Hospital
Polizei	Police
Nicht rauchen	No smoking
Kein Eingang	No entrance
Drücken	Push
Ziehen	Pull
Frei	Vacant
Besetzt	Occupied
Verboten	Prohibited
Kasse	Cash desk/ticket office

Questions and requests

All enquiries should start with the phrase *Entschuldigen Sie bitte* (Excuse me, please). Though strictly you should use Sie, the polite form of address, with everyone except close friends, young people often don't bother with it. However, the older generation and anyone official will certainly be offended if you address them with the familiar *Du*.

Sprechen Sie Englisch?	Do you speak English?
Ich spreche kein Deutsch	I don't speak German
Sprechen Sie bitte langsamer	Please speak more slowly
Ich verstehe nicht	I don't understand
Ich verstehe	I understand
Wie sagt mann das auf Deutsch?	How do you say that in German?
Können Sie mir sagen wo . . . ist?	Can you tell me where . . . is?
Wo ist . . . ?	Where is . . . ?
Wieviel kostet das?	How much does that cost?
Wann fährt der nächste Zug?	When does the next train leave?
Um wieviel Uhr?	At what time?
Wieviel Uhr ist es?	What time is it?
Sind die Plätze noch frei?	Are these seats taken?
Die Rechnung bitte	The bill please
Ist der Tisch frei?	Is that table free?
Die Speisekarte bitte	The menu please
Fräulein . . . !	Waitress . . . ! (for attention)
Herr Ober . . . !	Waiter . . . ! (for attention)
Haben Sie etwas billiger?	Have you got something cheaper?
Haben Sie Zimmer frei?	Are there rooms available?
Wo sind die Toiletten bitte?	Where are the toilets please?

Ich hätte gern dieses	I'd like that one
Ich hätte gern ein Zimmer für zwei	I'd like a room for two
Ich hätte gern ein Einzelzimmer	I'd like a single room
Hat es Dusche, Bad, Toilette?	Does it have a shower, bath, toilet?

Numbers

0	null
1	eins
2	zwei
3	drei
4	vier
5	fünf
6	sechs
7	sieben
8	acht
9	neun
10	zehn
11	elf
12	zwölf
13	dreizehn
14	vierzehn
15	fünfzehn
16	sechszehn
17	siebzehn
18	achtzehn
19	neunzehn
20	zwanzig
21	ein-und-zwanzig
22	zwei-und-zwanzig
30	dreissig
40	vierzig
50	fünfzig
60	sechzig
70	siebzig
80	achtzig
90	neunzig
100	hundert
1000	tausend
1999	neunzehn-hundert-neun-und-neu nzig
2000	zweitausand
2005	zweitausand-und-fünf
2006	zweitausand-und-sechs

Food and drink

Basics

Abendessen	supper/dinner
Auflauf	omelette
Beilagen	side dishes
Brot	bread
Butter	butter
Ei	egg
Frühstuck	breakfast
Gabel	fork
Gebäck	pastries
Hauptgericht	main course
Honig	honey
Käse	cheese
Knödel	dumplings
Kren	horseradish
Löffel	spoon
Messer	knife
Mittagessen	lunch
Nachspeise	dessert
Öl	oil
Pfeffer	pepper
Reis	rice
Salat	salad
Salz	salt
Semmel	bread roll
Senf	mustard
Spätzle/Nocker	pasta/noodles
Speisekarte	menu
Suppe	soup
Tasse	cup
Teller	plate
Vorspeise	starter
Zucker	sugar

Vegetables (Gemüse)

Blaukraut	red cabbage
Bohnen	beans
Champignons	button mushrooms
Erbsen	peas
Erdäpfel	potatoes
Fisolen	green beans
G'röste	fried grated potatoes
Gurke	gherkin/cucumber
Karfiol	cauliflower
Karotten	carrots
Knoblauch	garlic
Kohl	cabbage
Lauch	leek
Maiskolben	corn on the cob
Paprika	green or red peppers
Paradeiser	tomatoes
Kohlsprossen	Brussels sprouts
Rote Rübe	beetroot
Pilze	mushrooms
Pommes Frites	chips/French fries
Sauerkraut	pickled cabbage
Spargel	asparagus
Spinat	spinach
Zwiebeln	onions

Meat (Fleisch) and poultry (Geflügel)

Eisbein	pig's trotters
Ente	duck
Fasan	pheasant
Gans	goose
Hackfleisch	mincemeat
Hammelfleisch	mutton
Hase	hare
Hirn	brains
Hirsch	venison
Huhn	chicken
Innereien	innards
Kalbfleisch	veal
Kuttelfleck	tripe
Lamm	lamb
Leber	liver
Nieren	kidneys
Puter	turkey
Rindfleisch	beef
Schinken	ham
Schweinefleisch	pork
Speck	bacon
Taube	pigeon
Zunge	tongue

Fish (Fisch)

Aal	eel
Fogosch	perch
Forelle	trout
Hecht	pike
Hummer	lobster
Karpfen	carp
Krabben	prawns
Krebs	crab
Lachs	salmon
Makrele	mackerel
Matjes	herring
Muscheln	mussels
Scholle	plaice
Seezunge	sole
Thunfisch	tuna
Tintenfisch	squid

Common food terms

Am Spiess	on the spit
Blau	rare
Eingelegte	pickled
Frisch	fresh
Gebacken	fried in breadcrumbs
Gebraten	roasted
Gedämpft	steamed

Gefüllt	stuffed
Gegrillt	grilled
Gekocht	cooked
Hausgemacht	homemade
Heiss	hot
Kalt	cold
Kümmelbraten	roasted with caraway seeds
Powidl	plum sauce
Geräucht	smoked

Fruit (Obst)

Ananas	pineapple
Apfel	apple
Banane	banana
Birne	pear
Brombeeren	blackberries
Erdbeeren	strawberries
Grapefruit	grapefruit
Heidelbeeren	bilberries
Himbeeren	raspberries
Kirschen	cherries
Marillen	apricots
Pflaumen	plums
Ribisel	redcurrants
Rosinen	raisins
Trauben	grapes
Zwetschgen	plums

Desserts

Baiser	meringue
Bienenstich	honey and almond tart
Buchteln	sweet dumplings
Käsekuchen	cheesecake
Marillenknödel	sweet apricot dumplings
Mohr im Hemd	chocolate steamed pudding with cream
Palatschinken	pancakes

Austrian specialities

Backhendl	chicken fried in breadcrumbs
Bauernschmaus	platter of cold sausage, pork and ham
Beuschel	chopped lung
Brettljause	platter of cold meats and bread
Debreziner	paprika-spiced sausage
Grammelknödel	pork dumplings
Kärntner Käsnudl	large parcel of pasta dough filled with cheese
Kasspätzln	pasta noodles with cheese
Schinkenfleckern	ham with noodles
Schlipfkrapfen	ravioli-like pasta parcels with a meat and/or potato filling
Schweinshaxe	pork knuckle
Stelze	leg of veal or pork
Tafelspitz	boiled beef, potatoes and horseradish sauce
Tiroler Gröstl	potatoes, onions and flecks of meat fried in a pan
Tiroler Knödel	dumplings with pieces of ham, often eaten in a soup
Wiener Schnitzel	breaded veal
Zwiebelrostbraten	slices of roast beef topped with fried onions

Drinks (Getränke)

Apfelsaft	apple juice
Bier	beer
Flasche	bottle
Gespritzer	white wine with soda

Glühwein	mulled wine
Grog	hot water with rum and sugar
Kaffee	coffee
Kakao	cocoa
Kir	white wine with blackcurrant
Korn	rye spirit
Kräutertee	herbal tea
Milch	milk
Mineralwasser	mineral water
Obstler	fruit schnapps
Orangensaft	orange juice
Roséwein	rosé wine
Rotwein	red wine
Sauermilch	sour milk
Schnapps	spirit
Sekt	sparkling wine
Sturm	new wine
Tee	tea
Traubensaft	grape juice
Trocken	dry
Wasser	water
Weisswein	white wine
Zitronentee	tea with lemon

Glossary

German terms

Abtei abbey.
Alm high alpine pasture, meadow.
Ausstellung exhibition.
Bach stream.
Bad spa, bath.
Bahnhof station.
Bau building.
Bauernhof farmhouse.
Beisl pub.
Berg mountain, hill.
Bezirk city district.
Brücke bridge.
Brünn Brno, capital of Moravia (Czech Republic).
Brunnen fountain.
Burg castle.
Busc henschank wine-tavern (see also Heuriger).
Bushaltestelle bus stop.
Denkmal memorial.
Dom cathedral.
Donau river Danube.
Dorf village.
Durchgang passageway.
Durchhaus literally a "through-house" – a house whose ground floor is open, allowing access to a street or courtyard.
Einbahnstrasse one-way street.
Erdegeschoss ground floor.
Erzherzog archduke.
Fasching carnival.
Feiertag holiday.
Flughafen airport.
Freibad outdoor swimming pool.
Friedhof cemetery.
Fussgängerzone pedestrian zone.
Gasse alley.
Gehweg footpath.
Gemälde painting.
Gemeindeamt local council offices.
Gemütlich snug or cosy.
Gletscher glacier.
Grab grave.
Gürtel Vienna's outer ring road.
Hallenbad indoor swimming pool.
Haltestelle bus/tram stop.
Haus house.
Herzog suke.
Heuriger wine-tavern.
Hof Court courtyard, mansion, housing complex.
Horn peak.
Hütte hut, mountain refuge.
Innere Stadt Inner city.
Jugendgästehaus youth hostel.
Jugendherberge youth hostel.
Kaffeehaus café.
Kaiser emperor.
Kapelle chapel.
Kärnten Carinthia.
Kaserne barracks.
Keller cellar.
Kino cinema.
Kirche church.
Kloster monastery, convent.
König king.
Krippe crib, Nativity scene.
Kunst art.
Kunst und Wunderkammer cabinet of curios.
Kurort health resort.
Laibach Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia.
Land (pl **Länder**) name given to each of the nine federal provinces of Austria.
Langlauf cross-country skiing.
Loipe prepared track for cross-country skiing.
Niederösterreich lower Austria.
Not emergency.

Oberösterreich upper Austria.
Palast palace.
Pfad path.
Platz square.
Pressburg Bratislava, capital of Slovakia.
Prinz prince.
Prunkräume ceremonial or state rooms in a palace or castle.
Quelle spring.
Rathaus town hall.
Reich empire.
Residenz palace.
Ring Inner-city ring road, such as the Ringstrasse in Vienna.
Ritter knight.
Rodelbahn Toboggan run.
Rollstuhl wheelchair.
Saal hall.
Sammlung collection.
Säule column.
Schanigarten summer terrace/back yard.
Schatzkammer treasury.
Schloss castle.
Schlucht gorge.
See lake.
Seilbahn cable car.
Sesselbahn chairlift.
Speicher reservoir.
Spitze peak.
Stadel, or **Stadl** barn or stable.
Stadt town.
Stau dam.
Stausee reservoir.
Steiermark Styria.
Stiege steps.
Stift collegiate church.
Stock floor.
Strand beach, shore.
Strandbad (pl **Strandbäder**) outdoor bathing area on a lake or river.
Strasse street.
Streichelzoo children's zoo (farm animals and so on).
Tal valley.
Talsperre dam.
Tierpark zoo or wildlife park.
Tor gate.
Trakt wing (of a building).
Turm tower.
Venedig Venice.
Viertel quarter, district.
Volk people, folk.
Vororte the outer suburbs of Vienna which lie beyond the Gürtel: the tenth to twenty-second districts of the city.
Vorstädte the inner suburbs of Vienna which lie between the Ring and the Gürtel: the third to ninth districts of the city.
Wald forest.
Wasserfall waterfall.
Wien Vienna.
Zimmer room.

Political terms and acronyms

Anschluss Literally a "joining together" or "union" – the euphemism coined by the Nazis for the invasion and annexation of Austria in March 1938.

Austro-fascism Term to describe the one-party state set up by Engelbert Dollfuss in 1934. Dollfuss headed the Fatherland Front (see VF), a non-Nazi clerical-fascist movement that lasted until the Anschluss in 1938.

Austro-Marxism Philosophy expounded by SDAP theorists such as Otto Bauer in the early twentieth century. While still adhering to the language of class war, its programme was essentially revisionist, arguing that the downfall of capitalism was inevitable and didn't have to be brought about by violence.

Babenbergs Dynasty who ruled over Austria from 976 to 1246.

Biedermeier The term (Bieder means "upright") derives from the satiric figure of Gottlieb Biedermeier, a Swabian schoolmaster created in 1850 by Ludwig Eichrocht, modelled on Eichrocht's own pious, law-abiding teacher in Baden-Baden, Samuel Sauter. It has been applied retrospectively to the period between 1815 and 1848 when Austria was under the sway of Prince Metternich. The era came to symbolize a safe,

bourgeois, cosy lifestyle, and was applied to the history, art and culture of the period.

BZÖ (Bündis Zukunft Österreich) The rather ominous-sounding Alliance for the Future of Austria is a far-right party founded in 2005 by Jörg Haider and other leading members of the FPÖ. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, the party gained seven seats.

CSP (Christlichsoziale Partei) The Christian Social Party was founded in the 1890s by Karl Lueger, who later became mayor of Vienna. The Christian Socials' combination of Catholicism, municipal socialism and anti-Semitism proved popular with the Austrians. They were the main party of government in the 1920s and from their ranks rose Engelbert Dollfuss, who later introduced Austro-fascism in 1933.

FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs) The Austrian Freedom Party was the successor to the postwar VdU (see p.599). A far-right party who rose to prominence in the 1990s and scored spectacular electoral success under the charismatic and controversial leadership of Jörg Haider.

Habsburg Royal dynasty whose powerbase was Austria from 1273 to 1918. Successive generations also held the office of Holy Roman Emperor from 1452 to 1806, and by marriage, war and diplomacy acquired territories across Europe.

Heimwehr Right-wing militia whose origins lay in the local armed groups formed after the collapse of the empire in 1918. After 1927, these regional militias joined together and created a political wing, the Heimatblock, which supported the onset of Austro-fascism in 1933.

Holy Roman Empire Revived title of the Roman Empire first bestowed by the pope on Charlemagne in 800. The emperor was chosen by the seven electors, and the title was passed around between the Hohenstaufen, Luxembourg and Habsburg families until 1438, when the Habsburgs made it hereditary. It was dissolved on the orders of Napoleon in 1806.

Josephine Of or pertaining to the reign of Emperor Josef II (1780–90).

KPÖ (Kommunistische Partei Österreichs) Austrian Communist Party, established in 1918 and still in existence.

Kristallnacht Literally "Crystal Night", after the broken glass that was strewn across the streets during the pogrom of November 9–10, 1938. On this one night the majority of Jewish shops and institutions in the Third Reich – and all but one of the synagogues in Vienna – were destroyed by the Nazis.

k.u.k. Kaiserlich und königlich (imperial and royal) – a title used after 1867 to refer to everything in the Austro-Hungarian empire. Everything within Hungary was prefaced with a "k." for königlich, everything in the rest of the empire "k.k." (kaiserlich-königlich; imperial-royal).

NSDAP (National Sozialistiche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) National Socialist German Workers' Party, the official name for the German Nazi Party.

ÖVP (Österreichische Volkspartei) Austrian People's Party, the main descendant of the Christian Socials, and the principal postwar centre-right party.

Pan-German This adjective covers a whole range of far-right political parties, who advocated Anschluss with Germany, many of whom came together in the 1920s under the banner of the Greater German People's Party (Grossdeutsche Volkspartei, GDVP).

Red Vienna The period of Socialist municipal government in Vienna which lasted from 1919 to 1934.

Schutzbund SDAP militia founded in 1923.

Schütze The "Tyrolean riflemen", territorial defence units that were used in Andreas Hofer's rebellion against the Tyrol's Franco-Bavarian overlords in 1809.

SDAP (Sozial-Demokratische Arbeiterpartei) Social Democratic Workers' Party, the name given to the Socialist Party, prior to World War II.

SPÖ (Sozialistische Partei Österreichs) The postwar Austrian Socialist Party, later changed to the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, but keeping the same acronym.

Staatsvertrag The Austrian State Treaty of 1955, which signalled the withdrawal of Allied troops – American, British, French and Soviet – from Austria, in return for Austrian neutrality.

Toleranzpatent The Patent of Tolerance decreed by Josef II in 1782, which allowed freedom of religious observance to Lutherans, Jews and, to a lesser extent, Protestants.

VdU (Verband der Unabhängigen) Union of Independents. Extreme nationalist party formed in 1949 and precursor of the FPÖ.

VF (Vaterländische Front) The Fatherland Front was founded in 1934 by Engelbert Dollfuss, the Christian Social Austrian chancellor who dissolved parliament and introduced Austro-fascism in 1933. The Front was a patriotic, clerico-fascist organization aimed at preventing the Nazis from seizing power.

Art and architectural terms

Ambulatory Passage round the back of a church altar, in continuation of the aisles.

Art Nouveau Sinuous and stylized form of architecture and decorative arts from the 1890s, known as Secession or Jugendstil in Austria.

Atlantes Pillars in the shape of musclemen, named after the Greek god Atlas, whose job it was to hold up the world.

Baldachin A canopy over an altar, tomb, throne or otherwise.

Baroque Expansive, exuberant architectural and sculptural style of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterized by ornate decoration, complex spatial arrangement and grand vistas.

Biedermeier Simple, often Neoclassical, style of art and architecture popular from 1815 to 1848 (see under "Political terms", p.669) and in part a reaction against the excesses of the Baroque period.

Caryatid Sculptured female figure used as a column. Similar to Atlantes (see above).

Chancel Part of the church where the main altar is placed, usually at the east end.

Chinoiserie Decorative style drawing on Chinese art and themes.

Diapers Ornamental patterning in brickwork.

Empire Neoclassical style of architecture and decorative arts practised in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Filigree Fanciful delicate ornamental decoration in metal or stone.

Fresco Painting applied to wet plaster, so that the colours immediately soak into the wall.

Glacis Sloping ground outside the outer fortifications of a city.

Gothic Architectural style prevalent from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, characterized by pointed arches and ribbed vaulting.

Historicism Style of architecture which apes previous styles – eg neo-Baroque, neo-Renaissance, neo-Gothic.

Jugendstil German/Austrian version of Art Nouveau, literally "youthful style" (see also "Secession" opposite).

Lierne A short rib that connects the main ribs of a vaulted ceiling.

Loggia Covered area on the side of a building, usually arcaded.

Lunette An oval or semicircular opening to admit light into a dome.

Nave Main body of a church, usually stretching from the western end to the chancel.

Neoclassicism Late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century style of architecture and design returning to classical Greek and Roman models as a reaction against the excess of Baroque and Rococo.

Oriel A bay window, usually projecting from an upper floor.

Quoins External cornerstones of a wall.

Ringstrasse Pompous, historicist (see opposite) style of architecture imitating Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Classical architecture, used to describe the buildings that line Vienna's Ringstrasse.

Rococo Florid, ornamental style of architecture and design, forming the last phase of Baroque.

Romanesque Solid architectural style of the late tenth to thirteenth centuries, characterized by round-headed arches and geometrical precision.

Secession Movement of artists who split (seceded – hence the term) from the city's

Academy of Arts in 1897. Also used more generally as a term synonymous with Jugendstil.

Sgraffito Monochrome plaster decoration effected by means of scraping back the first white layer to reveal the black underneath.

Spandrel The surface area between two adjacent arches.

Stucco Plaster used for decorative effects.

Transepts The wings of a cruciform church, placed at right angles to the nave and chancel.

Trompe l'oeil Painting designed to fool the onlooker into thinking that it is three-dimensional.

Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops) A

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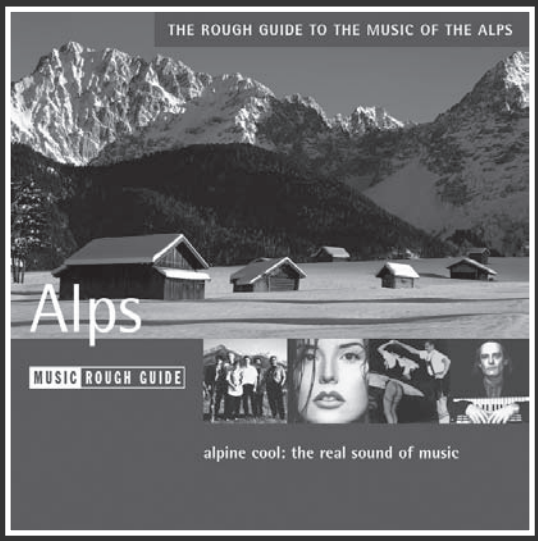

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Help us update

We've gone to a lot of effort to ensure that the fourth edition of **The Rough Guide to Austria** is accurate and up to date. However, things change – places get "discovered", opening hours are notoriously fickle, restaurants and rooms raise prices or lower standards. If you feel we've got it wrong or left something out, we'd like to know, and if you can remember the address, the price, the hours, the phone number, so much the better.

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Map symbols

maps are listed in the full index using coloured text

- Chapter boundary
- International boundary
- Provincial boundary
- Motorway
- Major road
- Minor road
- Steps
- Underpass
- Path
- River
- Ferry route
- Railway
- Funicular railway
- Chairlift
- Wall
- Gorge
- Peak
- Waterfall
- Cave
- Ruins
- Fountain
- Museum
- Wine/vineyard
- Tourist office
- S-Bahn
- U-Bahn
- Bus stop
- Airport
- Parking
- Bridge
- Gate
- Hospital
- Post office
- Swimming pool
- Campsite
- Castle
- Monastery
- Synagogue
- Church (regional maps)
- Church (town maps)
- Building
- Christian cemetery
- Jewish cemetery
- Park/forest
- Swamp

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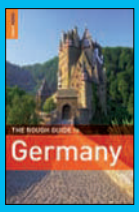

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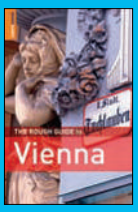

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